

5-28-04

IFW \$DAE



EV 216 779 346 US

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application of : Sanford Henick et al.  
Serial No : 10/781,039  
Filed : February 17, 2004  
For : Self-Centering Mobile  
Examiner : Unknown  
Art Unit : 3611

Mail Stop Petition  
Commissioner for Patents  
P. O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**PETITION TO CORRECT INCORRECTLY ENTERED DATE-IN  
PURSUANT TO 37 CFR § 1.10(d)**

Dear Sir:

Applicant respectfully petitions the Commissioner to accord a filing date for the above-referenced application as **February 17, 2004**, the date the application was deposited with the United States Postal Service (USPS). In support therefor, Applicant submits the following:

1. The above-referenced patent application was deposited in the USPS "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service, in an Express Mail envelope bearing Express Mail Number EV 216 832 695 US, on February 17, 2004. (See Exhibit 1.)
2. The customer copy of the Express Mail Label for this application was returned showing the "Date-In" by the USPS as February 18, 2004. (See Exhibit 1.)
3. An official Filing Receipt for this application was received showing the filing date of the application as February 18, 2004, rather than February 17, 2004, when the application was deposited into the custody and control of the USPS for mailing by Express Mail. (See Exhibit 2.)

4. 37 CFR 1.10(d) provides that

“[a]ny person filing correspondence under this section that was received by the Office and delivered by the “Express Mail Post Office to Addressee” service of the USPS, who can show that the “date-in” on the “Express Mail” mailing label or other official notation entered by the USPS was incorrectly entered or omitted by the USPS, may petition the Commissioner to accord the correspondence a filing date as of the date the correspondence is shown to have been deposited with the USPS, provided that:

(1) The petition is filed promptly after the person becomes aware that the Office has accorded, or will accord, a filing date based upon an incorrect entry by the USPS;

(2) The number of the “Express Mail” mailing label was placed on the paper(s) or fee(s) that constitute the correspondence prior to the original mailing by “Express Mail”; and

(3) The petition includes a showing which establishes, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner, that the requested filing date was the date the correspondence was deposited in the “Express Mail Post Office to Addressee” service prior to the last scheduled pickup for that day. Any showing pursuant to this paragraph must be corroborated by evidence from the USPS . . . .”

5. In review of the “Declaration of Mr. Nickolas D. Koon,” “Declaration of Mr. Charlie Ryan,” “Declaration of Mr. Jim Thomas,” and “Declaration of J. Michael Boggs” (Exhibits 3, 4, 5, and 6, respectively), Applicant states the following facts:

5.a. Mr. Nickolas Koon deposited Express Mail envelope bearing Express Mail Number EV 216 832 695 US for “Express Mail Post Office to Addressee” service at the Winston-Salem Main Post Office by 6:00 p.m. on February 17, 2004, prior to the last scheduled pickup for that day. Thus, the USPS had custody and control of the Express Mail envelope prior to the last scheduled pickup for Express Mail on February 17, 2004.

5.b. There was not enough time for processing the Express Mail envelope at the Winston-Salem Post Office, and the Express Mail envelope, according to normal procedure, was sent to the Pleasant Ridge Road Processing and Distribution Center.

5.c. The Express Mail envelope was bundled with five (5) other Express Mail envelopes (identified in Exhibit 7) deposited at the same time. One of the Express Mail envelopes, having Express Mail Number EV 367 777 713 US, in the bundle was scanned in at the Processing and Distribution Center as “enroute” to Greensboro, NC at 6:13 p.m., on February 17, 2004, indicating that the bundle of Express Mail envelopes, including Express Mail envelope having number EV 216 832 695 US, had been deposited with the USPS and was in USPS custody and control on February 17, 2004. (See Exhibit 8.)

5.d. The Express Mail envelope was sent from the Processing and Distribution Center to, and received at, the Greensboro Air Mail Center by 11:00 p.m. on February 17, 2004.

5.e. Due to a large volume of mail received at the Greensboro Air Mail Center on February 17, 2004, the Express Mail envelope was processed at 8:52 a.m. on February 18, 2004, rather than on February 17, 2004.

5.f. The Express Mail envelope was under the custody and control of the USPS on February 17, 2004. Under normal business operations, the “Date-In” date on the Express Mail envelope would have been entered by USPS on February 17, 2004. Therefore, because the “Date-In” on the Express Mail mailing label was entered as February 18, 2004, the “Date-In” on the Express Mail mailing label was incorrectly entered by the USPS.

6. This petition is being filed promptly after the undersigned became aware that the Office accorded a filing date based upon an incorrect entry by the USPS. An official Filing Receipt for this application showing the filing date of the application as February 18, 2004, rather than February 17, 2004, was mailed on May 14, 2004, and received by the undersigned on

May 18, 2004. (See Exhibit 2.) The undersigned investigated the circumstances surrounding the incorrect "Date-In" entry by the USPS, interviewed USPS employees on several occasions, and prepared declarations accompanying this petition prior to receiving the official Filing Receipt. This petition is being filed promptly after receipt of the official Filing Receipt showing that the Office accorded a filing date based upon an incorrect entry by the USPS.

7. The investigation of the circumstances surrounding the incorrect "Date-In" entry by the USPS, the normal operating procedures at the involved USPS facilities, and the declarations submitted herewith were reviewed and approved by Mr. Arthur S. Kramer, Esq, in the USPS Area Law Office in Philadelphia, PA.

8. The number of the Express Mail mailing label was placed on the application papers prior to the original mailing by Express Mail. (See Exhibits 1, 9, and 10.)

9. This petition includes a showing which establishes that the requested filing date was the date the application was deposited in the "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service prior to the last scheduled pickup for that day. This showing is corroborated herein by evidence from the USPS.

10. Therefore, Applicant respectfully petitions the Commissioner to accord a filing date for the above-referenced application as February 17, 2004.

The Office is respectfully invited to contact J. Michael Boggs at (336) 747-7536, to discuss any matter relating to this application.

Respectfully submitted,

5/27/04  
Date

J. Michael Boggs  
J. Michael Boggs  
Reg. No. 46,563

Kilpatrick Stockton LLP  
1001 West Fourth Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101  
(336) 747-7536  
(336) 734-2632 (facsimile)

# EXHIBIT 1



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPL NO.	FILING OR 371 (c) DATE	ART UNIT	FIL FEE REC'D	ATTY. DOCKET NO	DRAWINGS	TOT CLMS	IND CLMS
10/781,039	02/18/2004	3611	0.00	36839-280284	8	30	3

CONFIRMATION NO. 8365

J. Michael Boggs  
Kilpatrick Stockton LLP  
1001 West Fourth Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101-2400

FILING RECEIPT



\*OC000000012666787\*

Date Mailed: 05/14/2004

Receipt is acknowledged of this regular Patent Application. It will be considered in its order and you will be notified as to the results of the examination. Be sure to provide the U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER, FILING DATE, NAME OF APPLICANT, and TITLE OF INVENTION when inquiring about this application. Fees transmitted by check or draft are subject to collection. Please verify the accuracy of the data presented on this receipt. If an error is noted on this Filing Receipt, please write to the Office of Initial Patent Examination's Filing Receipt Corrections, facsimile number 703-746-9195. Please provide a copy of this Filing Receipt with the changes noted thereon. If you received a "Notice to File Missing Parts" for this application, please submit any corrections to this Filing Receipt with your reply to the Notice. When the USPTO processes the reply to the Notice, the USPTO will generate another Filing Receipt incorporating the requested corrections (if appropriate).

Applicant(s)

Sanford Henick, Residence Not Provided;  
Robert Henick, Residence Not Provided;

Domestic Priority data as claimed by applicant

**EXHIBIT 2**

Foreign Applications

If Required, Foreign Filing License Granted: 05/13/2004

Projected Publication Date: To Be Determined - pending completion of Missing Parts

Non-Publication Request: No

Early Publication Request: No

\*\* SMALL ENTITY \*\*

Title

Self-centering mobile

Preliminary Class

DOCKETED

FOR: JmB

DUE DATE:                     

DN: 5/18/04 BY: KF

040

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**LICENSE FOR FOREIGN FILING UNDER  
Title 35, United States Code, Section 184  
Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, 5.11 & 5.15**

**GRANTED**

The applicant has been granted a license under 35 U.S.C. 184, if the phrase "IF REQUIRED, FOREIGN FILING LICENSE GRANTED" followed by a date appears on this form. Such licenses are issued in all applications where the conditions for issuance of a license have been met, regardless of whether or not a license may be required as set forth in 37 CFR 5.15. The scope and limitations of this license are set forth in 37 CFR 5.15(a) unless an earlier license has been issued under 37 CFR 5.15(b). The license is subject to revocation upon written notification. The date indicated is the effective date of the license, unless an earlier license of similar scope has been granted under 37 CFR 5.13 or 5.14.

This license is to be retained by the licensee and may be used at any time on or after the effective date thereof unless it is revoked. This license is automatically transferred to any related applications(s) filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d). This license is not retroactive.

The grant of a license does not in any way lessen the responsibility of a licensee for the security of the subject matter as imposed by any Government contract or the provisions of existing laws relating to espionage and the national security or the export of technical data. Licensees should apprise themselves of current regulations especially with respect to certain countries, of other agencies, particularly the Office of Defense Trade Controls, Department of State (with respect to Arms, Munitions and Implements of War (22 CFR 121-128)); the Office of Export Administration, Department of Commerce (15 CFR 370.10 (j)); the Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of Treasury (31 CFR Parts 500+) and the Department of Energy.

**NOT GRANTED**

No license under 35 U.S.C. 184 has been granted at this time, if the phrase "IF REQUIRED, FOREIGN FILING LICENSE GRANTED" DOES NOT appear on this form. Applicant may still petition for a license under 37 CFR 5.12, if a license is desired before the expiration of 6 months from the filing date of the application. If 6 months has lapsed from the filing date of this application and the licensee has not received any indication of a secrecy order under 35 U.S.C. 181, the licensee may foreign file the application pursuant to 37 CFR 5.15(b).




**DECLARATION OF MR. NICKOLAS D. KOON**  
**IN SUPPORT OF**  
**PETITION TO CHANGE INCORRECTLY ENTERED DATE-IN**

1. I, Nickolas D. Koon, am employed as a Records Technician in the Winston-Salem Office of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP, located at 1001 West Fourth Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101-2400.
2. On February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004, at approximately 5:35, I entered the Operations Center of the Winston-Salem office of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP. I checked the logbook for Express Mail entries. The logbook indicated that eight (8) Express Mail Envelopes were to be delivered to the Winston-Salem Main Post Office for the United States Postal Service (USPS), located at 1500 Patterson Ave, Winston-Salem, NC 27102. The eight Express Mail Envelopes were bundled together by a rubber band. I verified that the bundle contained eight Express Mails Envelopes.
3. I proceeded to my car with the eight Express Mail envelopes and left the parking lot of the Winston-Salem office of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP at approximately 5:45 p.m. I proceeded directly to the Winston-Salem Main Post Office.
4. The Winston-Salem Main Post Office is located approximately 2.1 miles from the Winston-Salem office of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP. The driving time between the two locations is approximately 5 minutes.
5. I entered the parking lot of the Winston-Salem Main Post Office through the back gate. The back gate is closed after 6:00 p.m.
6. I arrived at the loading dock of the Winston-Salem Main Post Office at 5:55 p.m. I carried the eight Express Mail Envelopes to the "Express Desk" through the double swinging doors adjacent to the loading dock.

7. Prior to 6:00 p.m., I placed the eight Express Mail Envelopes directly next to the weighing machine and the scanner/computer station, which is used to weigh and scan Express Mail Envelopes when they arrive.
8. The employee normally manning the Express Desk was not at the Express Desk.

Pursuant to and in accordance with 28 U.S.C. Section 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 17<sup>th</sup> day of March 2004.



Nickolas D. Koon  
Kilpatrick Stockton LLP


**DECLARATION OF MR. CHARLIE RYAN OF THE USPS**  
**IN SUPPORT OF**  
**PETITION TO CHANGE INCORRECTLY ENTERED DATE-IN**

1. I, Charlie Ryan, am employed as a Supervisor at the Winston Salem Main Office for the United States Postal Service (USPS), located at 1500 Patterson Ave, Winston Salem, NC 27102.
2. On February 25, 2004, I spoke with Mr. John C. Alemanni of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP in Winston-Salem, N.C. regarding the mailing of six (6) Express Mail envelopes from the Main Office location of the USPS to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) in Alexandria, Virginia.
3. The normal procedures for handling Express Mail envelopes received at the Main Office location are as follows:
  - 3.1. Normal business hours of Main Office are from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays.
  - 3.2. During normal business hours, a USPS employee can receive Express Mail envelopes at the Main Office Express Desk via the back dock until 6:00 p.m., which is closed after 6:00 p.m.
  - 3.3. Access to the back dock is via the back gate, which is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays.
  - 3.4. Express Mail envelopes received by the USPS employee during normal business hours are scanned in and given a date-in of the data on which they are received if they are received during normal business hours;

- 3.5. The USPS employee then weighs the selected Express Mail envelope and enters the weight, date in, time in, post office zip code, and total postage due onto the return receipt of the Express Mail envelope.
- 3.6. A carbon copy of the return receipt is then removed from the selected Express Mail envelope for mailing back to the customer.
- 3.7. The Express Mail envelope is then placed in a bag and sent in a truck to the Processing and Distribution Center, which is located at 1120 Pleasant Ridge Road, Greensboro, NC, 27425.
- 3.8. The Express Mail envelope is then sent from the Processing and Distribution Center to the Greensboro Air Mail Center, which is located at 6321 Bryan Blvd, Ste E, Greensboro, NC, 27409.
4. Although I have no personal knowledge of when the courier from Kilpatrick Stockton LLP arrived on February 17, 2004, I have observed him arrive on numerous occasions; he generally arrives between 5:30 p.m. and 5:45 p.m.

Pursuant to and in accordance with 28 U.S.C. Section 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 26 day of Feb. 2004.

  
Charlie Ryan  
United States Postal Service

**DECLARATION OF MR. JIM THOMAS OF THE USPS**  
**IN SUPPORT OF**  
**PETITION TO CHANGE INCORRECTLY ENTERED DATE-IN**

1. I, Jim Thomas, was employed as Acting Manager on February 17 and 18, 2004, at the Greensboro Air Mail Center for the United States Postal Service (USPS), located at 6321 Bryan Boulevard, Suite G, Greensboro, NC 27409.

2. The normal procedures for handling Express Mail envelopes at the Greensboro Air Mail Center are as follows:

2.1. There are two means for receiving Express Mail envelopes at the Greensboro Air Mail Center: at the Window Unit from persons depositing envelopes directly; and deliveries received at the Mail Processing Unit from the Processing and Distribution Center at 1120 Pleasant Ridge Road ("Processing and Distribution Center"), Greensboro, NC 27498.

2.2. Normal business hours for the Greensboro Air Mail Center Window Unit are 7:30 am – 9:00 pm on weekdays; the Mail Processing Unit is open to receive deliveries from the Processing and Distribution Center on a 24-hour per day basis, seven days a week.

2.3. When an Express Mail envelope is deposited for delivery at a USPS facility, a USPS employee weighs the envelope, and then enters the weight, "Date In", "Time In", zip code where "accepted", total postage due, and the employee's initials onto the Express Mail label for the envelope. A carbon copy of the Express Mail label (return receipt) is then removed from the label for returning to the customer.

2.4. The normal handling of Express Mail involves consolidating mail from smaller offices, through processing centers, to Air Mail facilities and then distribution to receiving offices for delivery the next day. The efficient transport and delivery of mail nationwide requires timely cutoff and dispatch of all Express Mail from offices where deposited.

2.5. The cutoff time for Express Mail deposit at the Winston-Salem Main Post Office is 6:00 p.m. However, a deposit at or close to 6:00 p.m. may not receive initial processing at the Winston-Salem office, but may be bundled and sent to the Processing and Distribution Center. At the Processing and Distribution Center, the envelope can be scanned and entered into the computer database to show that it is "enroute." Express Mail envelopes are sent from the Processing and Distribution Center to the Greensboro Air Mail Center.

2.6. Under normal operating procedures, Express Mail envelopes received at the Greensboro Air Mail Center from the Processing and Distribution Center are scanned into the computer database on the day received. If the volume of mail received exceeds the capacity for processing on the day received, processing may be delayed until the following day.

3. On February 25, 2004, I personally inspected copies of the customer copy for the six (6) Express Mail envelopes, which indicate the "Date In" and "Time In" for the six envelopes as follows:

EV31518232US	February 18, 2004	9:28 am
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EV367777713US	February 18, 2004	9:02 am
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EV216832404US	February 18, 2004	8:12 am
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EV216832378US	February 18, 2004	8:07 am
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EV216832695US	February 18, 2004	8:52 am
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EV315188566US	February 18, 2004	8:03 am.
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4. On February 25, 2004, I personally reviewed copies of the electronic tracking records of the USPS for the six Express Mail envelopes bearing the above Express Mail numbers. The Express Mail envelope bearing the number EV367777713US, is indicated as having been scanned in at the Pleasant Ridge Road Processing and Distribution Center as "enroute" to Greensboro, NC at 6:13 p.m. on February 17, 2004.

5. It is my understanding that under normal operating procedures at the Pleasant Ridge Road Processing and Distribution Center, scanners are downloaded each day before midnight. Accordingly, the scan for an Express Mail envelope on a particular day would be downloaded into the USPS computer database on the same day that the envelope was scanned.

6. After reviewing the above procedures related to the Winston-Salem Main Post Office and the Pleasant Ridge Road Processing and Distribution Center, with careful consideration of the facts as recited in preceding paragraphs, and considering the statements in the accompanying "Declaration of N. Koon", "Declaration of Mr. Charlie Ryan", "Declaration of J. Alemanni", and "Declaration of M. Boggs", I state that:

6.1. The six above-referenced Express Mail envelopes were deposited at the Winston-Salem Main Post Office by 6:00 p.m. on February 17, 2004, at which time the USPS had custody and control of the six Express Mail envelopes. If the Express Mail envelopes had been received at the Winston-Salem office earlier in the day on February 17, 2004, they would have been weighed and entered into the computer tracking system on February 17, 2004, at the Winston-Salem office, and the Express Mail label receipts would show that date. Since there was not enough time for processing in Winston-Salem, the Express Mail envelopes, under normal procedure, would be sent to the Processing and Distribution Center and then to the Greensboro Air Mail Center.

6.2. At the Pleasant Ridge Road Processing and Distribution Center, one of these six Express Mail envelopes (EV367777713US) was scanned in as "enroute" to Greensboro, NC at 6:13 p.m., on February 17, 2004. The six Express Mail envelopes deposited at the Winston-Salem Main Post Office were bundled together, which resulted in only the top Express Mail envelope in the bundle being scanned. This scan indicates that the bundle of Express Mail envelopes had been deposited with the USPS and was in USPS custody and control on February 17, 2004.

6.3. The customer copies for these six Express Mail envelopes indicate that the "Date In" and "Time In" were entered on these envelopes, and these six envelopes were "accepted",

between 8:03 am and 9:28 am on February 18, 2004, at the Greensboro Air Mail Center. To my knowledge, no Express Mail envelopes were received at the Greensboro Air Mail Center from the Processing and Distribution Center between 11:00 pm on February 17, 2004, and 8:00 am on February 18, 2004, when these six Express Mail envelopes were processed at the Greensboro Air Mail Center. The only way that the Greensboro Air Mail Center could have processed the six Express Mail envelopes as early in the morning on February 18, 2004, is if each of the envelopes had been sent from the Processing and Distribution Center on February 17, 2004. Thus, each of these six Express Mail envelopes, processed during this time period on February 18, 2004, were received at the Greensboro Air Mail Center before 11:00 p.m. on February 17, 2004.

6.4. Due to the closing of the USPS on the Presidents' Day Federal Holiday on February 16, 2004, on which date many open businesses deposited a typical volume of parcels for mailing, a much greater volume of parcels than normal was received by the Greensboro Air Mail Center on February 17, 2004. The Greensboro Air Mail Center does not have the capacity to process such an increased volume of mail in the normal time frame. As a result, Express Mail envelopes received at the Greensboro Air Mail Center later in the day on February 17, 2004, but before 11:00 p.m., had processing delayed until the following day.

6.5. The only reason that these six Express Mail envelopes were processed at the Greensboro Air Mail Center is that USPS processing moved the bundle of Express Mail envelopes there as part of its responsibility to deliver the mail. The "acceptance date" on the Express Mail label receipts mailed to the sending customer is for tracking purposes and does not indicate that the USPS did not have custody and control of the Express Mail envelopes until then.

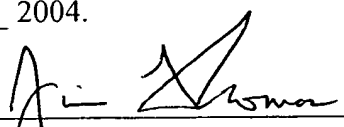
7. In view of the USPS procedures stated above, the facts recited herein, and the "Declarations" noted above, I conclude that these six Express Mail envelopes were deposited into the custody and control of the USPS on February 17, 2004, that one of the batch of six Express Mail envelopes was scanned in as "enroute" to Greensboro, NC, at the Pleasant Ridge Road Processing and Distribution Center on February 17, 2004, that these six Express Mail envelopes were received at the Greensboro Air Mail Center before 11:00 pm on February 17,



2004, and that under normal business operations, the "Date In" dates on these six Express Mail envelopes could have been entered on February 17, 2004.

Pursuant to and in accordance with 28 U.S.C. Section 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 21 day of May 2004.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Thomas  
US Postal Service

99997-095962  
WINLIB01:1059967.1

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Applicant : Sanford Henick et al.  
Serial No. : 10/781,039  
Filing Date : February 17, 2004  
Title : Self-Centering Mobile  
Examiner : Unknown  
Art Unit : 3611

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**DECLARATION OF J. MICHAEL BOGGS**

1. I, J. Michael Boggs, am a registered patent attorney and practice with Kilpatrick Stockton LLP, located in their Winston-Salem office at 1001 West Fourth Street, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27101-2400.

2. On February 17, 2004, I assisted in the final preparation of the above-identified application for filing in the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) via "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service with the United States Postal Service (USPS).

3. I supervised Debbie Cooke in preparation of an Express Mail Certificate (See Exhibit 9), the addressing of Express Mail Label No. EV 216 832 695 US (See Exhibit 1) to the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, the placement of the Express Mail Label Number on the application papers (See Exhibit 10), the placement of the application into an Express Mail Envelope, the sealing of the Express Mail Envelope, and the placement of the Express Mail Label on the envelope at approximately 4:30 p.m. on February 17, 2004.

4. The sealed and addressed Express Mail Envelope was placed in the "out box" in my office, and was picked up by personnel from the Operations Center in our office at approximately 5:00 p.m., as is normally done on each weekday.

5. I received the completed customer copy of the Express Mail Label on February 20, 2004. The returned customer copy of the Express Mail Label for US Patent Application No.

**EXHIBIT 6**

10/781,039, Express Mail Number EV 216 832 695 US, incorrectly indicates that the Express Mail Envelope was deposited with the USPS on February 18, 2004. (See Exhibit 1.)

6. On February 20, 2004, I spoke with Nickolas Koon, an employee of Kilpatrick Stockton LLP, who is located in the Winston-Salem, North Carolina office. According to Mr. Koon, he entered the Winston-Salem Main Post Office located at 1500 Patterson Avenue, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27102, through the back gate, and delivered the Express Mail Envelope in a bundle along with at least five (5) other Express Mail Envelopes to the Express Desk at 5:55 p.m. on February 17, 2004. (See Exhibits 3 and 7.) According to Mr. Charlie Ryan of the United States Postal Service, the back gate is closed at 6:00 p.m. and all Express Mail Envelopes received at the Main Post Office at or before 6:00 p.m. are processed on that date. (See Exhibit 4.)

7. According to the information provided to me by Mr. Koon and Mr. Ryan, it is my belief that the Express Mail Envelope was delivered to the Winston-Salem Main Post Office prior to 6:00 p.m. on February 17, 2004, and should have been accepted with a "date-in" of February 17, 2004. Thus, the "date-in" on the customer copy of the Express Mail Envelope was incorrectly entered as February 18, 2004.

8. On February 25, 2004, I checked the United States Postal Service Express Mail Tracking Service website, which indicates that the Express Mail Envelope having Express Mail Number EV 216 832 695 US was "accepted" on February 18, 2004, at 8:53 am, in Greensboro, NC 27425; was "enroute" on February 18, 2004, at 4:31 pm, in Greensboro, NC 27425; arrived on February 19, 2004, at 8:14 am, at "unit" in Dulles, VA 20102; and was delivered on February 19, 2004, at 10:42 am, at the Patent Office in Alexandria, VA 22313. A copy of the "Track & Confirm" page from this website was printed. (See Exhibit 8.)

9. On February 25, 2004, I spoke with Mr. Jim Thomas, Acting Manager at the Greensboro Air Mail Center for the United States Postal Service (USPS), located at 6321 Bryan Boulevard, Suite G, Greensboro, NC 27409. According to Mr. Thomas, if an Express Mail Envelope is received at the Greensboro Air Mail Center Mail Processing Center by 11:00 p.m.,

the Express Mail Envelope will be processed on that date. According to Mr. Thomas, the Express Mail Envelope was delivered to the Greensboro Air Mail Center prior to 11:00 p.m. on February 17, 2004, but due to the volume of mail received that evening, the personnel of the Greensboro Air Mail Center were unable to scan and process all of the Express Mail Envelopes according to normal operating procedures. (See Exhibit 5.) According to the information provided to me by Mr. Thomas, it is my belief that the Express Mail Envelope arrived at the Greensboro Air Mail Center prior to 11:00 p.m. on February 17, 2004 and should have been accepted with a "Date-In" of February 17, 2004. Thus, the "Date-In" on the customer copy of the Express Mail Envelope was incorrectly entered as February 18, 2004.

10. The Return Postcard was received for US Patent Application No. 10/781,039, Express Mail Number EV 216 832 695 US, which incorrectly indicates February 18, 2004, as the filing date of the application, not February 17, 2004, the date the application was deposited into the custody and control of the USPS for mailing by Express Mail. (See Exhibit 11.)

11. On May 18, 2004, an official Filing Receipt was received for US Patent Application No. 10/781,039, which incorrectly indicates February 18, 2004, as the filing date of the application, not February 17, 2004, the date the application was deposited into the custody and control of the USPS for mailing by Express Mail. (See Exhibit 2.)

5/27/04  
Date

J. Michael Boggs  
J. Michael Boggs  
Reg. No. 46,563

Kilpatrick Stockton LLP  
1001 West Fourth Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101  
(336) 747-7536  
(336) 734-2632 (facsimile)

Express Mail Certificate  
No. 216 779 346 US



EV 315183232 US



Customer Copy  
Label 11-F, June 2002

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE®

Post Office To Addressee

ORIGIN (POSTAL USE ONLY)			DELIVERY (POSTAL USE ONLY)		
PO ZIP Code <b>27425</b>	Day of Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Next <input type="checkbox"/> Second <input type="checkbox"/>	Flat Rate Envelope	Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Date In Mo. <b>2</b> Day <b>18</b> Year <b>04</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 12 Noon <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM	Postage <b>\$ 13.65</b>	Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Time In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Military <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Day <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Day	Return Receipt Fee	Delivery Date	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Weight <b>15</b> lbs. ozs.	Int'l Alpha Country Code	COD Fee Insurance Fee	NO DELIVERY		
No Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday	Acceptance Clerk Initials <b>RNS</b>	Total Postage & Fees <b>\$ 13.65</b>			
CUSTOMER USE ONLY METHOD OF PAYMENT: Express Mail Corporate Acct. No. <b>X271093</b>			Federal Agency Acct. No. or Postal Service Acct. No.		
FROM: (PLEASE PRINT) KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP 1001 W 4TH ST WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2410 John C. Alemanni, Esq. 49942/279572			TO: (PLEASE PRINT) Mail Stop: Missing Parts Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450		

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Air Mail Center Station  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
274259998

02/18/2004 (800)275-8777 09:30:10 AM

Product Description	Sale Qty	Unit Price	Final Price
ALEXANDRIA VA 22313			\$13.65

Express Mail PO-ADD Flat Rate

Serial Number EV315183232US

Next Day Noon / Normal

Delivery

Paid by account: \$13.65

EMCA account number: 271093

Total: \$0.00

Paid by:

Bill#: 1000400576087

Clerk: 03

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## ORIGIN (POSTAL USE ONLY) 2

PO ZIP Code 27425	Day of Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Next <input type="checkbox"/> Second	Flat Rate Envelope <input type="checkbox"/>
Date In Mo. 2 Day 18 Year 04	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 Noon <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM	Postage \$ 13.25
Time In Mo. 04 Day 02	Military <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Day <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Day	Return Receipt Fee
<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Int'l Alpha Country Code	COD Fee Insurance Fee
Weight lbs. 3 ozs.	Acceptance Copy Initials BJS	Total Postage & Fees \$ 13.25
No Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday		

## DELIVERY (POSTAL USE ONLY)

Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Mo. Day		
Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Mo. Day		
Delivery Date	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Mo. Day		
<input type="checkbox"/> WAIVER OF SIGNATURE (Domestic Only) Additional merchandise insurance is void if waiver of signature is requested. With delivery to be made without obtaining signature of addressee or addressee's agent, delivery employee judges that article can be left in secure location and authorizes that delivery employee's signature is required as valid proof of delivery.		
NO DELIVERY <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday		

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K271093

Federal Agency Acct. No. or Postal Service Acct. No.

## FROM: (PLEASE PRINT)

PHONE (336) 607-7300

KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP  
1001 W 4TH ST  
WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2410

John Alemani

104093C (51851/281233)

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RCE

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Proc. LFM  
2/17

Air Mail Center Station  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
274259998

02/18/2004 (800)275-8777 09:04:23 AM

Sales Receipt			
Product Description	Sale Qty	Unit Price	Final Price
ALEXANDRIA VA 22313			\$13.65
Express Mail PO-ADD			
Serial Number	EV36777713US		
Next Day Noon / Normal			
Delivery			
Paid by account:			\$13.65
EMCA account number:			271093

Total: \$0.00

Paid by:

Bill#: 1000400575949

Clerk: 03

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ORIGIN (POSTAL USE ONLY)				DELIVERY (POSTAL USE ONLY)			
PO ZIP Code <b>27425</b>	Day of Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Next <input type="checkbox"/> Second	Flat Rate Envelope <input type="checkbox"/>		Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature	
Date In Mo. <b>2</b> Day <b>18</b> Year <b>04</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 Noon <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM	Postage \$ <b>13.65</b>		Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature	
Time In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Military <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Day <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Day	Return Receipt Fee		Delivery Date	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature	
Weight lbs. <b>7</b> ozs.	Int'l Alpha Country Code	COD Fee	Insurance Fee	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>WAIVER OF SIGNATURE</b> (Domestic Only) Additional merchandise insurance is void if waiver of signature is requested. I wish delivery to be made without obtaining signature of addressee or addressee's agent (if delivery employee judges that article can be left in secure location) and I authorize that delivery employee's signature constitutes valid proof of delivery.			
No Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday	Acceptance Clerk Initials <b>828</b>	Total Postage & Fees \$ <b>13.65</b>		<b>NO DELIVERY</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Customer Signature _____			
<b>CUSTOMER USE ONLY</b> METHOD OF PAYMENT: Express Mail Corporate Acct. No. <b>X271093</b>				Federal Agency Acct. No. or Postal Service Acct. No.			
<b>FROM: (PLEASE PRINT)</b> PHONE <b>(336) 607-7300</b> <b>KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP</b> <b>1001 W 4TH ST</b> <b>WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2610</b>  <b>Attn: John Alemanni, Esq.</b>  <b>IMM139 (51851/287298)</b>				<b>TO: (PLEASE PRINT)</b> PHONE ( )			

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Greensboro, North Carolina  
274259998

02/18/2004 (800)275-8777 08:16:19 AM

Product Description	Sale Qty	Unit Price	Final Price
ALEXANDRIA VA 22313			\$13.65

Express Mail PO-ADD  
Serial Number EV216832404US  
Next Day Noon / Normal  
Delivery  
Paid by account: \$13.65  
EMCA account number: 271093

Total: \$0.00

Paid by:

Bill#: 1000400575766  
Clerk: 03

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ORIGIN (POSTAL USE ONLY)		
PO ZIP Code 27425	Day of Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Next <input type="checkbox"/> Second <input type="checkbox"/>	Flat Rate Envelope <input type="checkbox"/>
Date In Mo. 2 Day 18 Year 0807	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 Noon <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM	Postage \$ 13.92
Time In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Military <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Day <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Day	Return Receipt Fee
Weight lbs. 5 ozs.	Int'l Alpha Country Code	COD Fee Insurance Fee
No Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday	Acceptance Clerk Initials [Signature]	Total Postage & Fees \$ 13.92

DELIVERY (POSTAL USE ONLY)		
Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Mo. Day		
Delivery Attempt	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Mo. Day		
Delivery Date	Time <input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	Employee Signature
Mo. Day		
<input type="checkbox"/> WAIVER OF SIGNATURE (Domestic Only) Additional merchandise insurance is void if waiver of signature is requested. I wish delivery to be made without obtaining signature of addressee or addressee's agent (if delivery employee judges that article can be left in secure location) and I authorize that delivery employee's signature constitutes valid proof of delivery.		
NO DELIVERY <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday		
Customer Signature		

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PHONE (336) 607-2360	
Attn: John Alvarado, Srq.	
IMMIVSA (S. 601/20130)	

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PO ZIP Code <b>27425</b>	Day of Delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Next <input type="checkbox"/> Second <input type="checkbox"/>	Flat Rate Envelope <input type="checkbox"/>
Date In Mo. <b>2</b> Day <b>18</b> Year <b>04</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 Noon <input type="checkbox"/> 3 PM	Postage <b>\$ 13.65</b>
Time In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM <b>0803</b>	Military <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd Day <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd Day	Return Receipt Fee
Weight lbs. <b>9</b> ozs.	Int'l Alpha Country Code	COD Fee Insurance Fee
No Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> Weekend <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday	Acceptance Clerk Initials <b>EDR</b>	Total Postage & Fees <b>\$ 13.65</b>

## DELIVERY (POSTAL USE ONLY)

Delivery Attempt	Time	Employee Signature
Mo. Day	<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	
Delivery Attempt	Time	Employee Signature
Mo. Day	<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	
Delivery Date	Time	Employee Signature
Mo. Day	<input type="checkbox"/> AM <input type="checkbox"/> PM	
<input type="checkbox"/> WAIVER OF SIGNATURE <input type="checkbox"/> NO DELIVERY		

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**X271093**Federal Agency Acct. No. or  
Postal Service Acct. No.

FROM: (PLEASE PRINT)

PHONE: **336-607-7300**

**KILPATRICK STOCKTON LLP**  
**1001 W 4TH ST**  
**WINSTON SALEM NC 27101-2410**  
**Toyce Southern--336-607-7457**  
**36869/297371 (PCT)**

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### Shipment Details

You entered EV21 6832 695U S

Your item was delivered at 10:42 am on February 19, 2004 in ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313 to PATENT OFFICE. The item was signed for by M BOSTON.

Here is what happened earlier:

- ARRIVAL AT UNIT, February 19, 2004, 8:14 am, DULLES, VA 20102
- ENROUTE, February 18, 2004, 4:31 pm, GREENSBORO, NC 27425
- ACCEPTANCE, February 18, 2004, 8:53 am, GREENSBORO, NC 27425

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### Shipment Details

You entered EV31 5183 232U S

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Here is what happened earlier:

- ARRIVAL AT UNIT, February 19, 2004, 8:08 am, DULLES, VA 20102
- ENROUTE, February 18, 2004, 4:31 pm, GREENSBORO, NC 27425
- ACCEPTANCE, February 18, 2004, 9:28 am, GREENSBORO, NC 27425

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### Shipment Details

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Here is what happened earlier:

- ARRIVAL AT UNIT, February 19, 2004, 8:14 am, DULLES, VA 20102
- ENROUTE, February 18, 2004, 4:31 pm, GREENSBORO, NC 27425
- ACCEPTANCE, February 18, 2004, 9:03 am, GREENSBORO, NC 27425
- ENROUTE, February 17, 2004, 6:13 pm, GREENSBORO, NC 27498

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- ENROUTE, February 18, 2004, 4:31 pm, GREENSBORO, NC 27425
- ACCEPTANCE, February 18, 2004, 8:13 am, GREENSBORO, NC 27425

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Here is what happened earlier:

- ARRIVAL AT UNIT, February 19, 2004, 8:08 am, DULLES, VA 20102
- ENROUTE, February 18, 2004, 4:31 pm, GREENSBORO, NC 27425
- ACCEPTANCE, February 18, 2004, 8:08 am, GREENSBORO, NC 27425

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Here is what happened earlier:

- ARRIVAL AT UNIT, February 19, 2004, 8:08 am, DULLES, VA 20102
- ENROUTE, February 18, 2004, 4:31 pm, GREENSBORO, NC 27425
- ACCEPTANCE, February 18, 2004, 8:04 am, GREENSBORO, NC 27425

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**EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE**

"Express Mail" Label No. : EV 216 832 695 US **EV216832695US**  
Serial No. : Applied For Herewith  
Applicant(s) : Sanford Henick et al.  
Filing Date : February 17, 2004  
Title : **"Self-Centering Mobile"**  
Examiner : Unassigned  
Group Art Unit : Unassigned  
Type of Document(s) : Express Mail Certificate;  
Utility Patent Application Transmittal;  
Transmittal of Application Under 37 CFR 1.41(c);  
Utility Patent Application (Specification-30 pages;  
drawings-8 pages (Figs. 1-10);  
Information Disclosure Statement Transmittal;  
Information Disclosure Statement (*in duplicate*);  
15 References (12 Patents and 3 Other Documents), and  
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Debbie K. Cooke (signature)  
Debbie K. Cooke

Date Mailed: February 17, 2004

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36869-280284

**EXHIBIT 9**

FOR: JMB

DUE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ON: 2/18/04 BY: KF



# UTILITY PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

(Only for new nonprovisional applications under 37 C.F.R. 1.53(b))

Attorney Docket No. 36839-280284

First Inventor Sanford Henick et al.

Title Self-Centering Mobile

Express Mail Label No. EV 216 832 695 US

## APPLICATION ELEMENTS

See MPEP chapter 600 concerning utility patent application contents.

1. ☐ Fee Transmittal Form (e.g., PTO/SB/17)  
(Submit an original and a duplicate for fee processing)
2. ☒ Applicant claims small entity status.  
See 37 CFR 1.27.
3. ☒ Specification [Total Pages 30]  
(preferred arrangement set forth below)  
- Descriptive title of the Invention  
- Cross Reference to Related Applications  
- Statement Regarding Fed sponsored R & D  
- Reference to sequence listing, a table,  
or a computer program listing appendix  
- Background of the Invention  
- Brief Summary of the Invention  
- Brief Description of the Drawings (if filed)  
- Detailed Description  
- Claim(s)  
- Abstract of the Disclosure
4. ☒ Drawing(s) (35 U.S.C. 113) [Total Sheets 8]  
5. Oath or Declaration [Total Sheets     ]  
a. ☐ Newly executed (original or copy)  
b. ☐ Copy from a prior application (37 CFR 1.63 (d))  
(for a continuation/divisional with Box 18 completed)  
i. ☐ DELETION OF INVENTOR(S)  
Signed statement attached deleting inventor(s)  
named in the prior application, see 37 CFR  
1.63(d)(2) and 1.33(b).
6. ☐ Application Data Sheet. See 37 CFR 1.76

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7. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R in duplicate, large table or  
Computer Program (Appendix)
8. Nucleotide and/or Amino Acid Sequence Submission  
(if applicable, all necessary)  
a. ☐ Computer Readable Form (CRF)  
b. Specification Sequence Listing on:  
i. ☐ CD-ROM or CD-R (2 copies); or  
ii. ☐ paper  
c. ☐ Statements verifying identity of above copies

## ACCOMPANYING APPLICATIONS PARTS

9. ☐ Assignment Papers (cover sheet & document(s))
10. ☐ 37 C.F.R. 3.73(b) Statement ☐ Power of  
(when there is an assignee) Attorney
11. ☐ English Translation Document (if applicable)
12. ☒ Information Disclosure ☒ Copies of IDS  
Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 Citations
13. ☐ Preliminary Amendment
14. ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)  
(Should be specifically itemized)
15. ☐ Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)  
(if foreign priority is claimed)
16. ☐ Nonpublication Request under 35 U.S.C. 122  
(b)(2)(B)(i). Applicant must attach form PTO/SB/35  
or its equivalent.
17. ☒ Other: 1. Transmittal Under 37 CFR 1.41c

18. If a CONTINUING APPLICATION, check appropriate box, and supply the requisite information below and in a preliminary amendment,  
or in an Application Data Sheet under 37 CFR 1.76:

☐ Continuation ☐ Divisional ☐ Continuation-in-part (CIP) of prior application No: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Prior application information: Examiner \_\_\_\_ Art Unit: \_\_\_\_

For CONTINUATION or DIVISIONAL APPS only: The entire disclosure of the prior application, from which an oath or declaration is supplied  
under Box 5b, is considered a part of the disclosure of the accompanying or divisional application and is hereby incorporated by reference.  
The incorporation can only be relied upon when a portion has been inadvertently omitted from the submitted application parts.

## 19. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

☐ Customer Number or Bar Code Label

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or ☒ Correspondence address below

Name J. Michael Boggs

Address Kilpatrick Stockton LLP  
1001 West Fourth Street

City Winston-Salem

State NC

Zip Code 27101-2400

Country USA

Telephone (336) 747-7536

Fax (336) 734-2632

Name (Print/Type)

J. Michael Boggs

Registration No. (Attorney/Agent)

46,563

Signature

J. Michael Boggs

Date

2/17/04

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.53(b). The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Mail Stop Patent Application, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

EXHIBIT 10

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**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Applicants : Sanford Henick et al.  
Serial No. : To Be Assigned  
Filing Date : Applied For Herewith  
For : Self-Centering Mobile

---

Mail Stop Patent Application  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**TRANSMITTAL OF APPLICATION UNDER 37 CFR 1.41(c)**

Dear Sir:

The undersigned attorney hereby makes the above-identified application for U.S. Letters Patent on behalf of the following Applicants:

Sanford Henick  
Robert Henick.

Please address all correspondence and direct all telephone calls in connection with this application to: J. Michael Boggs, Esq., Kilpatrick Stockton LLP, 1001 West Fourth Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101-2400, (336) 747-7536 (phone), (336) 734-2632 (facsimile).

Respectfully submitted,

2/17/04  
Date

J. Michael Boggs  
J. Michael Boggs  
Reg. No. 46,563

Kilpatrick Stockton LLP  
1001 West Fourth Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101-2400  
(336) 747-7536 (voice)  
(336) 734-2632 (facsimile)

**Patent Application**

**SELF-CENTERING MOBILE**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

This application claims priority to pending U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/447,559, filed February 14, 2003, which is incorporated herein in its entirety.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to mobiles and in particular to mobiles having self-centering and balanced arms, connectors, and display members. Embodiments of the present invention provide mobile display members and arms that freely rotate a continuous 360 degrees.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

A mobile is defined as a type of sculpture consisting of carefully equilibrated parts that move, especially in response to air currents. Mobiles have been made for many years. Engineering principles were applied to the art of mobile-making in the early and mid-twentieth century by the American artist Alexander Calder, who is known as the "Father of the Mobile." One aim of such a sculpture is to depict movement, that is, kinetic rather than static rhythms. In a conventional mobile, display objects of the same or varying shapes are suspended, for example, from a hook attached to a wire. The display objects are attached to a support structure. A hook is positioned at the fulcrum, or balance point, of the support structure such that support structure and the display objects are balanced. The balance point in a mobile is affected by the

weight of the objects being displayed and the distance the objects are located from each other along the fulcrum about which the objects are suspended. Mobiles can include sub-assemblies of one or more display objects that are arranged to form a branching, or “tree” mobile. Display objects can be positioned along the balanced display axis in symmetrical or asymmetrical arrangement. Jump rings, or small circle loops, can be added to the structure from which the objects are suspended to add rotational movement of the objects.

However, conventional mobiles that include such connections between support arms and display elements allow displayed items to move clockwise or counterclockwise in less than a full or continuous 360 degree rotation. Display elements of conventional mobiles encounter some degree of torque as the display elements rotate, and often succeed in rotating less than 180 degrees before stopping and turning in the opposite direction. Such mobiles have the disadvantage of preventing full circumferential movement of the displayed items such that a person may not be able to view all sides of the displayed item without manipulating the displayed item or moving to the other side of the mobile to view it.

Conventional mobiles do not include arms, connection elements, and display members that cooperate to provide a self-centering and balanced mobile. In particular, conventional mobiles fail to allow display of combinations of vertically-oriented and horizontally-oriented display members that together are self-centering and balanced.

Thus, there is a need to provide a mobile that is self-centering and balanced and that provides full and continuous 360 degree rotation of displayed items.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a self-centering and balanced mobile having a full and continuous 360 degree rotation of its arms and display members.

In an embodiment, a self-centering mobile of the present invention includes a frame, a plurality of freely rotatable connectors, and a horizontally disposed arm having two ends and a balance point between the two ends. The arm is suspended from the frame at the balance point with one of the freely rotatable connectors. A display member is suspended from each end of the arm with another one of the freely rotatable connectors. The display members have a weight so that the arm is balanced when it is suspended from the frame at the arm balance point.

In one embodiment, the mobile arm comprises a substantially closed loop at the balance point and at each end of the arm. The arm can comprise a continuous, round rod of substantially rigid material. Preferably, the rod of material includes spring steel. In embodiments, the rod of material comprises a coating that includes zinc, which provides a surface with a lower coefficient of resistance that contributes to the self-centering characteristic of the present invention.

The freely rotatable connectors can include a spinner assembly adapted to rotate freely for 360 degrees in both clockwise and counter-clockwise directions. One such spinner assembly has a hollow central body with an aperture in both the top and bottom of the body. The central body has an eye hook disposed in both its top and bottom. Each eye hook has a base larger than the apertures and is rotatably secured inside the central body. The hook portion of the eye hook extends through the aperture. The connectors also include a means for attaching the spinner assembly to the frame and to the arm.

One embodiment of a means for attaching the spinner assembly to the frame and to the arm comprises a spring clip formed from a round rod of spring steel. The rod is formed into a

1 substantially closed "S" shape. Each end of the rod is bent outwardly from the spring clip to  
2 form a receiving channel to help guide the frame and the arm into the rounded portions of the  
3 spring clip. Preferably, the spring steel rod of the spring clip has a coating that includes zinc,  
4 which provides a smooth contact with the mobile arm and facilitates self-centering of the display  
5 member supported by the spring clip on the mobile arm.

6 In embodiments, a mobile of the present invention has a plurality of display members  
7 suspended from one or both ends of the arm. In this case, the balance point is located on the arm  
8 at a pre-determined point such that a particular combination of display members is balanced. In  
9 another combination of the present invention, at least one other arm is suspended from one or  
10 both ends of the arm with one of the freely rotatable connectors.

11 In another aspect of the present invention, the display member comprises a display  
12 enclosure that includes a single, flat sheet of transparent material folded over onto itself to form  
13 opposing panels for receiving a substantially flat item for display between the panels.  
14 Preferably, the transparent material includes polyethylene terephthalate glycol (PETG). The  
15 panels can have an aperture near the top and through the panels for connecting the panels to a  
16 freely rotatable connector. The panels are spaced apart approximately one millimeter (mm) to  
17 form a bottom for supporting the display item and for facilitating movement of the display item  
18 between the panels. In one embodiment, at least one panel has a cutout near an edge of the panel  
19 for facilitating insertion and removal of the display item between the panels.

20 A mobile of the present invention can include a plurality of display enclosures of  
21 differing dimensions and that are oriented for vertical display or for horizontal display. Display  
22 enclosures having the same dimensions also have the same weight, and can therefore be  
23 interchanged for vertical or horizontal display.

1 In another aspect of the present invention, a mobile includes a means for mounting the  
2 frame to a surface, either in a stationary or adjustable manner. One such means for mounting a  
3 frame in a stationary manner includes an oblong block of material having a bore hole extending  
4 at least partially downward through the block toward the bottom for fittingly receiving the frame.  
5 A threaded hole extends through the front of the block approximately perpendicularly to and  
6 intersecting with the bore hole. A screw can be threaded through the threaded hole for tightening  
7 against the frame to secure the frame in the bore hole.

8 Another embodiment of a means for mounting the frame to a surface allows the frame to  
9 be mounted in an adjustable manner. For example, a block of material has two holes extending  
10 at least partially through the block in approximately perpendicular directions. One hole is a bore  
11 hole for fittingly receiving the frame. The other hole is a threaded hole intersecting with the bore  
12 hole. A first screw is inserted into the threaded hole for tightening against the frame to secure  
13 the frame in the bore hole. A second screw is inserted through another hole in the block  
14 perpendicular to the bore hole and through a threaded hole in the block-mounting portion of a  
15 bracket. As such, the block and frame can be adjusted and secured in a range of positions within  
16 an approximately 90 degree angle around an upright position.

17 Another embodiment for adjustably mounting the frame to a surface includes a circular  
18 block of material having a plurality of holes about the circumference that extend at least partially  
19 through the block in approximately perpendicular directions. Each pair of holes includes a bore  
20 hole for fittingly receiving the frame and a threaded hole intersecting with the bore hole. A first  
21 screw can be inserted into the threaded hole for tightening against the frame to secure the frame  
22 in the bore hole. A second screw can be inserted through another threaded hole in the circular  
23 block perpendicular to the plurality of paired bore holes and into a threaded

1 hole in the front of a rectangular block. Accordingly, the circular block and frame can be  
2 adjustably secured in a range of positions within a 360 degree span.

3 In either of these means for mounting the frame to a surface, such as a wall or desk, an  
4 adhesive may be applied to the back of the block for attaching the block and frame to the surface.  
5 Embodiments of the present invention include methods of using a self-centering mobile. One  
6 such embodiment includes the steps of providing a frame, a plurality of freely rotatable  
7 connectors, and a horizontally disposed arm comprising a round rod of spring steel and a  
8 substantially closed loop at each of two ends and at a balance point between the two ends. The  
9 arm can be suspended from the frame at the balance point with one of the freely rotatable  
10 connectors. A display member can be suspended from each end of the arm with another one of  
11 the freely rotatable connectors. The display members have a weight so that the arm is balanced  
12 when suspended from the frame at the arm balance point.

13 In another embodiment of a method, the arm can be suspended from the frame and the  
14 display member can be suspended from each end of the arm with a spring clip formed from a  
15 round rod of spring steel into a substantially closed "S" shape. Each end of the rod is bent  
16 outwardly from the spring clip to form a receiving channel for receiving the frame and the arm.  
17 One of the spring clips is attached to the top and another spring clip is attached to the bottom of a  
18 spinner assembly. The spinner assembly is adapted to rotate freely for 360 degrees in both  
19 clockwise and counter-clockwise directions. A plurality of display members can be suspended  
20 from at least one end of the arm, and the balance point is located on the arm at a pre-determined  
21 point such that a particular combination of display members is balanced. At least one other arm  
22 can be suspended from at least one end of the arm with one of the freely rotatable connectors.



1           Features of a self-centering mobile of the present invention may be accomplished  
2 singularly, or in combination, in one or more of the embodiments of the present invention. As  
3 will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art, the present invention has wide utility in a  
4 number of applications as illustrated by the variety of features and advantages discussed below.

5           A self-centering mobile of the present invention provides numerous advantages over  
6 prior mobiles. For example, the present invention advantageously provides a self-centering and  
7 balanced mobile.

8           Another advantage is that the present invention provides a mobile having arms and  
9 display members that are each freely rotatable through a full and continuous 360 degrees in both  
10 clockwise and counterclockwise directions.

11          Another advantage is that the present invention provides a mobile having display  
12 members, such as photograph enclosures, in which displayed items are easily accessible with a  
13 thumb-sized cutout on one or more edges of the display member.

14          Another advantage is that the present invention provides a self-centering, fully-rotatable  
15 mobile adapted for uninterrupted attention-gathering motion useful in point-of-sale advertising,  
16 for example, at a check-out counter in a retail store.

17          Another advantage is that the present invention provides a self-centering, fully-rotatable  
18 mobile that is easy and inexpensive to manufacture and to use.

19          As will be realized by those of skill in the art, many different embodiments of a self-  
20 centering mobile according to the present invention are possible. Additional uses, objects,  
21 advantages, and novel features of the invention are set forth in the detailed description that  
22 follows and will become more apparent to those skilled in the art upon examination of the  
23 following or by practice of the invention.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

FIGURE 1 is a view of a mobile displaying one vertical display enclosure and four horizontal display enclosures in an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 2 is a view of mobile arms and freely rotatable connectors in an embodiment of the present invention. The mobile arms show angled mobiles arm having rounded and substantially closed loops.

FIGURE 3 is a view of a spinner assembly connected to a spring slip at the top and at the bottom in an embodiment of the present invention. The lower spring clip is connected to a closed loop of an arm.

FIGURE 4 is a view of dual lock snap fastener in an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 5 is a view of a means for stationarily mounting a frame to a surface in an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 6 is a view of the means for stationarily mounting a frame to a surface shown in Fig. 5, with suspended arms and display elements in an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 7 is a view of a means for adjustably mounting a frame to a surface in an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 8 is a view of a means for adjustably mounting a frame to a surface in another embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 9 is a view of the means for adjustably mounting a frame to a surface shown in Fig. 7, with suspended arms and display elements in an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGURE 10 is a view of the means for adjustably mounting a frame to a surface shown in Fig. 8, with suspended arms and display elements in an embodiment of the present invention.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention provides a self-centering and balanced mobile having a full and continuous 360 degree rotation of its arms and display members. Figures 1-10 show various embodiments of mobiles of the present invention.

As shown in the embodiment in Figs. 1 and 2, a self-centering mobile 10 of the present invention includes a frame 20, a plurality of freely rotatable connectors 30, and a horizontally disposed arm 40 having two ends 41 and a balance point 42 between the two ends 41. The arm 40 is suspended from the frame 20 at the balance point 42 with one of the freely rotatable connectors 30. A display member 50 is suspended from each end 41 of the arm 40 with another one of the freely rotatable connectors 30. The display members 50 have a weight so that the arm 40 is balanced when it is suspended from the frame 20 at the arm balance point 42.

The mobile arm 40 comprises a substantially closed loop 43 at the balance point 42 and at each end 41 of the arm 40. The arm 40 can comprise a continuous, round rod 44 of substantially rigid material. Preferably, the rod 44 of material includes spring steel 45.

A mobile superstructure, or frame 20, supports mobile arms 40 and display members 50 from the tops of the arms 50. The frame 20 can be any number of structures that provide a means for suspending a mobile arm 40 and display members 50. For example, a frame 20 can be a support arm 40 mounted to a wall or to other surfaces, such as a work station or computer monitor. Alternatively, a mobile frame 20 can be a table stand. In one embodiment, mobile arms 40 comprise a continuous rod of material in shapes having various angles. For example, a mobile arm 40 can be straight or can have an angle between about 15 degrees and about 175 degrees.

1 In embodiments of the present invention, the middle and end loops 43 of mobile arms 40  
2 are precision-made utilizing programmable “computer numerical control” (“CNC”) wire bending  
3 technology. Manufacturing tolerances are held to small ranges to assure consistently made arms  
4 40 and loops 43 in order to help provide the ability to balance and self-center in a suspended  
5 mobile 10. The arms 40 can be formed from light stock spring steel 45 having recovery  
6 properties, for example music wire.

7 Rods 44 of the present invention can be made from fine tempered, light-gauge music spring steel  
8 45 wire. The round-shaped ends and balance point of the mobile arm 40 have a 360 degree  
9 round-to-round surface interaction at points of contact with the generally lighter gauge, for  
10 example, 5502-1 and 5502-2 gauge, spring steel connector 30 components, such as a spring clip  
11 70. A round-to-round surface contact allows gravity to maintain the mobile 10 structures on  
12 center balance points and thus facilitate balance of asymmetrically arranged display members.

13 In embodiments, the rod 44 of material comprises a coating 46 that includes zinc, which  
14 provides a surface with a lower coefficient of resistance that contributes to the self-centering  
15 characteristic of the present invention. A zinc coating 46 provides a harder, smoother, and  
16 slicker surface than conventional powder-coated surfaces due to an uneven thickness of  
17 application, uneven distribution of particulates in the powder, and presence of contaminants in  
18 powder. Such a zinc-coated 46 surface facilitates increased efficiency of rotating motion and  
19 prevents rusting. Mobile arms 40 can be any color desired, for example, in one embodiment,  
20 mobile arms 40 are black.

21 As shown best in Figs. 2 and 3, the freely rotatable connectors 30 can include a spinner  
22 assembly 60 adapted to rotate freely in an uninhibited manner for 360 degrees in both clockwise  
23 61 and counter-clockwise 62 directions. One such spinner assembly 60 has a hollow central

1 body 63 with an aperture 66 in both the top 64 and bottom 65 of the body 63. The central body  
2 63 has an eye hook 67 disposed in both its top 64 and bottom 65. Each eye hook 67 has a base  
3 (not shown) larger than the apertures 66 and is rotatably secured inside the central body 63. The  
4 hook portion of the eye hook 67 extends through the aperture 66. The connectors 30 also include  
5 a means for attaching the spinner assembly 60 to the frame 20 and to the arm 40.

6 One embodiment of a means for attaching the spinner assembly 60 to the frame 20 and to  
7 the arm 40 comprises a spring clip 70 formed from a round rod 71 of spring steel 72. The rod 71  
8 is formed into a substantially closed “S” shape 73. Each end 74 of the rod 71 is bent outwardly  
9 from the spring clip 70 to form a receiving channel 75 to help guide the frame 20 and the arm 40  
10 into the rounded portions of the “S” shape 73 of the spring clip 70. In embodiments in which the  
11 spring clip 70 is made from spring steel 72, after another structure is slid between the outwardly  
12 bent end 74 and the body of the spring clip into a rounded portion of the substantially closed loop  
13 of the spring clip 70, the spring steel biases the temporary opening between the end 74 and the  
14 spring clip 70 body back together to a substantially closed position. As such, the connected  
15 structure remains securely positioned on the spring clip 70. Preferably, the spring steel rod 71 of  
16 the spring clip 70 has a coating that includes zinc, which provides a smooth contact with the  
17 mobile arm 40 and facilitates self-centering of the display member 50 supported by the spring  
18 clip 70 on the mobile arm 40.

19 Spring clips 70 can be made in various sizes to fit onto mobile arms 40 and display  
20 members 50. In one embodiment, spring clips 70 for attaching to display members 50 are  
21 approximately one inch in length. Spring clips 70 for attaching to a mobile arm 40 can be  
22 approximately one-half inch in length. A spring clip 70 can have one loop of the “S” shape  
23 larger than the other loop. A longer loop facilitates fitting the spring clip 70 over the end of a

1 display member 50, such as a plastic photograph enclosure. This is particularly helpful when the  
2 attachment opening in a photograph display enclosure is located away from the edge of the  
3 display member 50.

4 In an alternative embodiment, the means for attaching the spinner assembly 60 to the  
5 frame 20 and to the arm 40 comprises a dual lock snap fastener 80, as shown in Fig. 4. Such a  
6 fastener 80 comprises a round rod of spring steel formed into an elongated oval-shaped body 81.  
7 The rod terminates with a first end 82 and an overlapping second end 83 on one side 85 of the  
8 body 81. The second end 83 is bent approximately perpendicularly to the longitudinal axis 84 of  
9 the fastener 80 across the fastener body 81. The second end 83 is bent around the opposite side  
10 86 of the body 81 in a releasable fashion to form a first latch, or lock, 87 biased closed by the  
11 inherent force of the spring steel. The first end 82 is bent approximately perpendicularly to the  
12 longitudinal axis 84 of the fastener 80 away from the fastener body 81 and around the first side  
13 82 in a releasable fashion to form a second lock 88 biased by the force of the spring steel. Other  
14 structures, such as a mobile arm 40, a spinner assembly 60, and a display member 50, can be  
15 inserted inside the snap fastener 80 when the dual locks 87, 88 are open, and the ends 82, 83 are  
16 biased back into place. The other structures are thus securely connected to the snap fastener 80.

17 In embodiments, as shown in Figs. 1, 6, 9, and 10, a mobile 10 of the present invention  
18 has a plurality of display members 50 suspended from one or both ends 41 of the arm 40. The  
19 balance point 42 is located on the arm 40 at a pre-determined point such that a particular  
20 combination of display members 50 is balanced. In another combination of the present  
21 invention, at least one other arm 40 is suspended from one or both ends 41 of the arm 40 with  
22 one of the freely rotatable connectors 30. Therefore, a self-centering mobile 10 of the present  
23 invention allows for display of different sizes and quantities of display members 50, such as

1 photographs, in an asymmetric arrangement that would otherwise require excessive amounts of  
2 time, labor, and expense to determine the precise configuration necessary to balance a particular  
3 combination of photographs. An asymmetric arrangement is defined as a greater number of  
4 display members 50 on one side of an arm balance point 42 than on the other side of the balance  
5 point 42. It was discovered that to facilitate maintenance of the balance of an asymmetrical  
6 arrangement, combinations of odd numbers of display members 50 are optimal. For example, a  
7 combination of three (3) or five (5) display members 50 allow maintenance of an asymmetrical  
8 balance, thus allowing a self-centering, display member-supporting mobile 10.

9       Mobiles 10 of the present invention can accommodate a variety of sizes in which  
10 photographs are offered commercially, including: 2<sup>1/2</sup>" x 3"; 3<sup>1/2</sup>" x 5"; 4" x 6"; 5" x 7"; and 8"  
11 x 10". Embodiments of the present invention are sometimes referred to as "photos in motion" or  
12 a "photo mobile." A display member 50 can be adapted for displaying information or a  
13 photograph from multiple sides. Such display members 50 may comprise an enclosure in which  
14 the enclosure can include, for example, two display surfaces or sides. Thus, three display  
15 members 50 having such enclosures can display six photographs, and five photograph enclosures  
16 50 can display ten photographs.

17       In embodiments of the present invention, each arm 40 and display member 50 has full  
18 and continuous 360 degree rotation. In such embodiments, connectors 30 between a mobile  
19 frame 20 and horizontally disposed arms 40 and between the arms 40 and display members 50  
20 are fully rotatable such that they have unimpeded movement throughout a full 360 degree circle  
21 and can rotate in sequential circles without interruption. As such, the present invention provides  
22 mobiles that are "freely-articulated". That is, the display members 50 can rotate fully clockwise  
23 61 and/or counterclockwise 62 so that one display member 50 can rotate in one direction while

1 another display member 50 on the same mobile 10 can rotate in the opposite direction at the  
2 same time.

3 In another aspect of the present invention, the display member 50 comprises a display  
4 enclosure 90 that includes a single, flat sheet 91 of transparent material folded over onto itself to  
5 form opposing panels 92 for receiving a substantially flat item for display between the panels 92.

6 Mobiles 10 of the present invention are useful for displaying a flat display item such as a  
7 photograph or piece of paper with educational, directional, and/or advertising information.

8 Embodiments of the present invention include display members 50 that can rotate a full and  
9 continuous 360 degrees. As such, display enclosures 90 having display items such as  
10 photographs and other graphic information can be displayed from more than one surface of a  
11 display member 50. The item displayed in a display enclosure 90 can be the same on both sides,  
12 or a different item can be displayed on each side of the enclosure 90. For example, a self-  
13 centering mobile 10 comprising three photograph display members 50 would allow display of six  
14 photographs, and a self-centering mobile 10 comprising five photograph display members 50  
15 would allow display of ten photographs.

16 Preferably, the transparent material includes polyethylene terephthalate glycol (PETG).  
17 The panels 92 can have an aperture 94 near the top 93 and through the panels 92 for connecting  
18 the panels 92 to a freely rotatable connector 30. The panels 92 are spaced apart 95  
19 approximately one millimeter (mm) to form a bottom 96 for supporting the display item and for  
20 facilitating movement of the display item between the panels 92. In one embodiment, at least  
21 one panel 92 has a cutout 97 near an edge of the panel 92 for facilitating insertion and removal of  
22 the display item between the panels 92.



1           Display enclosures 90 can be made by cutting a blank of material with a die and folding  
2   the cut blank. A hole is cut in the exact center near the top 93 edge, for example, approximately  
3   one-fourth inch from the top edge of the enclosure 90. Cutting the hole through the two layers of  
4   material when they are folded together can produce a slight fusion of the material around the  
5   edges of the hole, providing a means for holding the top 93 of the enclosure together.

6   Alternatively, display enclosures can be injection molded. Preferably, all exterior edges of the  
7   display enclosures 90 are smoothed and the corners are rounded to facilitate manipulation by  
8   users without risk of scratching the user's hand on the enclosure 90.

9           Display enclosures 90 of the present invention can be made of various materials that  
10   allow viewing a displayed item, such as a photograph or other graphic image, through the  
11   material and that are of a weight appropriate for balance on a mobile. Acrylic can be used for  
12   display enclosures 90; however, acrylic becomes too heavy for enclosures that 8" x 10" or  
13   larger. In addition, acrylic tends to yellow and thus not be as clear as desired for optimal  
14   viewing of a displayed item. Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) enclosures can also be used, but PVC  
15   tends to have wide color variations from batch to batch due to pigmentation irregularities. In  
16   embodiments of the present invention, display enclosures 90 are made from polyethylene  
17   teraphthalate glycol (PETG) (available commercially from Piedmont Plastics, Inc.). PETG is  
18   preferred because it retains a clear quality. In preferred embodiments, PETG is machined with a  
19   protective film on the surfaces of the material to protect against scratching during handling. To  
20   provide flat display enclosures that do not tend to warp, or "roll up," it is preferred to use sheet  
21   stock of PETG rather than a roll.

22           As shown in Figs. 1, 6, 9, and 10, a mobile 10 of the present invention can include a  
23   plurality of display enclosures 50 of differing dimensions and that are oriented for vertical

1 display 98 or for horizontal display 99. Display enclosures 90 having the same dimensions also  
2 have the same weight, and can therefore be interchanged for vertical 98 or horizontal display 99.  
3 That is, vertically-oriented display enclosures 98 and horizontally-oriented display enclosures 99,  
4 for example of the 2 1/2" x 3 1/2" size, are each made to have the same weight. As such, each  
5 enclosure of the same size, whether vertical or horizontal, can be interchanged on a mobile arm  
6 40. Any combination of vertical 98 and horizontal 99 enclosures of the same size can thus be  
7 used for display and maintain a self-centering balance. Accordingly, display enclosures 90 can  
8 be displayed in an asymmetric arrangement on a mobile arm 40 while maintaining a self-  
9 centering balance.

10 In another aspect of the present invention, a mobile 10 includes a means for mounting the  
11 frame 20 to a surface, either in a stationary or adjustable manner. Embodiments of mobiles 10  
12 of the present invention can be mounted on a variety of surfaces. For example, such mobiles 10  
13 can be utilized to display photographs and/or other images on a table, from a wall, on office  
14 systems mounting surfaces, on shelving, on computer terminals, and other similar surfaces. In  
15 yet another aspect of the present invention, an adjustable arm for mounting a self-centering  
16 mobile to a computer monitor or other movable surface is provided. An adjustable mounting  
17 arm includes a built-in leveling device that can be adjusted to maintain the mobile arms 40  
18 connectors 30, and display members 50 perpendicular to the floor so that the mobile 10 will be  
19 self-centering and balanced.

20 One such means 100 for mounting a frame 20 in a stationary manner includes an oblong  
21 block 101 of material having a bore hole 106 extending at least partially downward through the  
22 block 101 toward the bottom 103 for fittingly receiving the frame 20. A threaded hole 107  
23 extends through the front 104 of the block 101 approximately perpendicularly to and intersecting

1 with the bore hole 106. A screw 108 can be threaded through the threaded hole 107 for  
2 tightening against the frame 20 to secure the frame 20 in the bore hole 106. The screw 108 for  
3 securing the frame 20 in the bore hole 106 can be a round-headed screw with a knurled surface  
4 for ease of manual turning. The screw 108 can also be slotted for final turning with a screw  
5 driver to achieve a tighter, more secure contact with the frame 20.

6 Another embodiment of a means 120 for mounting the frame to a surface allows the  
7 frame to be mounted in an adjustable manner. For example, a block 121 of material has two  
8 holes extending at least partially through the block 121 in approximately perpendicular  
9 directions. One hole is a bore hole 106 for fittingly receiving the frame 20. The other hole is a  
10 threaded hole 107 intersecting with the bore hole 106. A first screw 122 is inserted into the  
11 threaded hole 107 for tightening against the frame 20 to secure the frame 20 in the bore hole 106.  
12 A second screw 126 is inserted through another hole 127 in the block perpendicular to the bore  
13 hole 106 and through a threaded hole (not shown) in the block-mounting portion 125 of a bracket  
14 123. As such, the block 121 and frame 20 can be adjusted and secured in a range of positions  
15 within an approximately 90 degree angle 128 around an upright position.

16 Another embodiment for adjustably mounting the frame to a surface includes a circular  
17 block 130 of material having a plurality of holes about the circumference 131 that extend at least  
18 partially through the block 130 in approximately perpendicular directions. Each pair of holes  
19 includes a bore hole 106 for fittingly receiving the frame 20 and a threaded hole 107 intersecting  
20 with the bore hole 106. A first screw 122 can be inserted into the threaded hole 107 for  
21 tightening against the frame 20 to secure the frame 20 in the bore hole 106. A second screw 126  
22 can be inserted through another threaded hole 127 in the circular block 130 perpendicular to the  
23 plurality of paired bore holes 106 and threaded holes 107 and into a threaded hole (not shown) in

1 the front 133 of a rectangular block 132. Accordingly, the circular block 130 and frame 20 can  
2 be adjustably secured in a range of positions within a 360 degree span. The materials from  
3 which the blocks 101, 121, 130 utilized in the mounting systems are made can be a light weight  
4 metal, such as aluminum.

5 In either of these means for mounting the frame 20 to a surface, such as a wall or desk, a  
6 means 109 for mounting the block 101, 121, 130 to a surface is provided. The means 109 for  
7 mounting such a block 101, 121, 130 to a surface can be an adhesive 110 applied to the back of  
8 the block 101, 121, 130 for attaching the block 101, 121, 130 and frame 20 to the surface. One  
9 such removable adhesive is the "Command" adhesive commercially available from 3M.

10 In alternative embodiments, a mobile 10 of the present invention can be mounted to a  
11 music box or other rotational table display for supporting and rotating a mobile 10.

12 Embodiments of the present invention include methods of using a self-centering mobile  
13 10. One such embodiment includes the steps of providing a frame 20, a plurality of freely  
14 rotatable connectors 30, and a horizontally disposed arm 40 comprising a round rod 44 of spring  
15 steel 45 and a substantially closed loop 43 at each of two ends 41 and at a balance point 42  
16 between the two ends 41. The arm 40 can be suspended from the frame 20 at the balance point  
17 42 with one of the freely rotatable connectors 30. A display member 50 can be suspended from  
18 each end 41 of the arm 40 with another one of the freely rotatable connectors 30. The display  
19 members 50 have a weight so that the arm 40 is balanced when suspended from the frame 20 at  
20 the arm balance point 42.

21 In another embodiment of a method, the arm 40 can be suspended from the frame 20 and  
22 the display member 50 can be suspended from each end of the arm 40 with a spring clip 70  
23 formed from a round rod 44 of spring steel into a substantially closed "S" shape 73. Each end of

the rod is bent outwardly from the spring clip 70 to form a receiving channel 75 for receiving the frame 20 and the arm 40. One of the spring clips 70 is attached to the top 64 and another spring clip 70 is attached to the bottom 65 of a spinner assembly 60. The spinner assembly 60 is adapted to rotate freely for 360 degrees in both clockwise 61 and counter-clockwise 62 directions. A plurality of display members 50 can be suspended from at least one end 41 of the arm 40, and the balance point 42 is located on the arm 40 at a pre-determined point such that a particular combination of display members 50 is balanced. At least one other arm 40 can be suspended from at least one end 41 of the arm 40 with one of the freely rotatable connectors 30.

In another aspect of the present invention, a mobile 10 comprising a plurality of mobile arms 40, connectors 30, and display members 50 is pre-assembled and packaged for retail sale. The pre-assembled and packaged mobile 10 can include sample display items, such as photographs, in display enclosures 90 to demonstrate how the enclosures 90 are to be used by the consumer. As such, embodiments of the present invention having multiple components that interact to provide a self-centering, balanced, fully freely rotatable mobile 10 are provided to consumers for immediate and easy installation and use. Another aspect of the pre-assembled feature of mobiles 10 of the present invention is that the substantially closed loops 43 of the arms 40 and the biasing nature of the spring steel 72 in spring clips 70 prevents the components from separating from each other after being assembled prior to packaging. In such a manner, embodiments comprising advertising information can be shipped ready for retail display. Alternatively, a mobile 10 can be packed in a mailer and then readily displayed by the recipient of the mailer.

Although the present invention has been described with reference to particular embodiments, it should be recognized that these embodiments are merely illustrative of the

1 principles of the present invention. Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that a self-  
2 centering mobile of the present invention may be constructed and implemented in other ways and  
3 embodiments. Accordingly, the description herein should not be read as limiting the present  
4 invention, as other embodiments also fall within the scope of the present invention.

5

1     What is claimed is:

2     1.     A self-centering mobile, comprising:

3         a frame;

4         a plurality of freely rotatable connectors;

5         a horizontally disposed arm having two ends and a balance point between the two ends,

6     the arm suspended from the frame at the balance point with one of the freely rotatable

7     connectors; and

8         a display member suspended from each end of the arm with another one of the freely

9     rotatable connectors and having a weight so that the arm is balanced when suspended from the

10    frame at the arm balance point.

11

12    2.     The mobile of claim 1, wherein the arm comprises a substantially closed loop at the

13    balance point and at each end of the arm.

14

15    3.     The mobile of claim 1, wherein the arm comprises a continuous, round rod of

16    substantially rigid material.

17

18    4.     The mobile of claim 3, wherein the rod of material comprises spring steel.

19

20    5.     The mobile of claim 3, wherein the rod of material comprises a coating that includes zinc.

21

22    6.     The mobile of claim 1, wherein the freely rotatable connectors comprise:

1 a spinner assembly adapted to rotate freely for 360 degrees in both clockwise and  
2 counter-clockwise directions; and  
3 a means for attaching the spinner assembly to the frame and to the arm.

4  
5 7. The mobile of claim 6, wherein the spinner assembly comprises:

6 a hollow central body having a top and a bottom and an aperture in each of the top and  
7 the bottom; and

8 an eye hook disposed in each of the top and the bottom of the central body, each eye  
9 hook having a base larger than the apertures rotatably secured inside the central body and a hook  
10 portion extending through the aperture.

11  
12 8. The mobile of claim 6, wherein the means for attaching the spinner assembly to the frame  
13 and to the arm comprises a spring clip formed from a round rod of spring steel, the rod formed  
14 into a substantially closed "S" shape, each end of the rod bent outwardly from the spring clip to  
15 form a receiving channel for receiving the frame and the arm.

16  
17 9. The mobile of claim 8, wherein the rod of spring steel comprises a coating that includes  
18 zinc.

19  
20 10. The mobile of claim 6, wherein the means for attaching the spinner assembly to the frame  
21 and to the arm comprises a dual lock snap fastener comprising:  
22 a round rod of spring steel formed into an elongated oval-shaped body, the rod  
23 terminating with a first end and an overlapping second end on a first side of the body,



wherein the second end is bent approximately perpendicularly to a longitudinal axis of the fastener across the fastener body and releasably around a second side of the body opposite the first side to form a first lock biased by the spring steel, and

wherein the first end is bent approximately perpendicularly to the longitudinal axis of the fastener away from the fastener body and releasably around the first side to form a second lock biased by the spring steel.

11. The mobile of claim 1, wherein a plurality of display members is suspended from at least one end of the arm, the balance point located on the arm at a pre-determined point such that a particular combination of display members is balanced.

12. The mobile of claim 11, wherein at least one other arm is suspended from at least one end of the arm with one of the freely rotatable connectors.

13. The mobile of claim 1, wherein the display member comprises a display enclosure comprising:

a single, flat sheet of transparent material folded over onto itself to form opposing panels for receiving a substantially flat item for display therebetween;

the panels having a top and an aperture near the top and through the panels for connecting the panels to a freely rotatable connector;

the panels spaced apart approximately one mm to form a bottom for supporting the display item and for facilitating movement of the display item between the panels; and

at least one panel having a cutout near an edge of the panel for facilitating insertion and removal of the display item between the panels.

14. The mobile of claim 13, wherein the sheet of transparent material comprises polyethylene terephthalate glycol.

15. The mobile of claim 13, further comprising a plurality of display enclosures of differing dimensions, a portion of the display enclosures adapted for vertical display and another portion adapted for horizontal display, wherein display enclosures for vertical display and display enclosures for horizontal display having the same dimensions comprise the same weight and are interchangeable.

16. The mobile of claim 1, further comprising a means for stationarily mounting the frame to a surface comprising:

an oblong block of material having a top, a bottom, a front, and a back;

a bore hole extending at least partially downward through the block toward the bottom for fittingly receiving the frame;

a threaded hole through the front of the block approximately perpendicular to and intersecting with the bore hole;

a screw insertable into the threaded hole for tightening against the frame to secure the frame in the bore hole; and

a means for mounting the block to a surface.

1 17. The mobile of claim 16, wherein the means for mounting the block to a surface comprises  
2 a removable adhesive applied to the back of the block.

3

4 18. The mobile of claim 1, further comprising a means for adjustably mounting the frame to a  
5 surface comprising:

6 a block of material having two holes extending at least partially through the block in  
7 approximately perpendicular directions, one hole comprising a bore hole for fittingly receiving  
8 the frame and the other hole comprising a threaded hole intersecting with the bore hole;

9 a first screw insertable into the threaded hole for tightening against the frame to secure  
10 the frame in the bore hole;

11 a bracket having a surface-mounting portion and a block-mounting portion perpendicular  
12 to the surface-mounting portion;

13 a second screw insertable through another hole in the block perpendicular to the bore hole  
14 and through a threaded hole in the block-mounting portion of the bracket for adjustably securing  
15 the block and frame in a range of positions within an approximately 90 degree angle around an  
16 upright position; and

17 a means for mounting the bracket to a surface.

18

19 19. The mobile of claim 18, wherein the means for mounting the bracket to a surface  
20 comprises a removable adhesive applied to the back of the bracket.

21

22 20. The mobile of claim 1, further comprising a means for adjustably mounting the frame to a  
23 surface comprising:

1 a circular block of material having a plurality of holes about the circumference and  
2 extending at least partially through the block in approximately perpendicular directions, each  
3 pair of holes comprising a bore hole for fittingly receiving the frame and the other hole  
4 comprising a threaded hole intersecting with the bore hole;  
5 a first screw insertable into the threaded hole for tightening against the frame to secure  
6 the frame in the bore hole;  
7 a rectangular block of material having a front and a back;  
8 a second screw insertable through another threaded hole in the circular block  
9 perpendicular to the plurality of paired bore holes and threaded holes and into a threaded hole in  
10 the front of the rectangular block for adjustably securing the circular block and frame in a range  
11 of positions within a 360 degree span; and  
12 a means for mounting the rectangular block to a surface.  
13  
14 21. The mobile of claim 20, wherein the means for mounting the rectangular block to a  
15 surface comprises a removable adhesive applied to the back of the rectangular block.  
16  
17 22. A self-centering mobile, comprising:  
18 a frame;  
19 a plurality of freely rotatable connectors;  
20 a horizontally disposed arm comprising a round rod of zinc-coated spring steel and  
21 having two ends and a balance point between the two ends, the arm suspended from the frame at  
22 the balance point with one of the freely rotatable connectors; and

1 a display member suspended from each end of the arm with another one of the freely  
2 rotatable connectors and having a weight so that the arm is balanced when suspended from the  
3 frame at the arm balance point,

4 wherein the arm comprises a substantially closed loop at the balance point and at each  
5 end of the arm,

6 wherein the freely rotatable connectors comprise a spinner assembly adapted to rotate  
7 freely for 360 degrees in both clockwise and counter-clockwise directions and further comprising  
8 a hollow central body having an aperture in each of a top and a bottom of the central body and an  
9 eye hook disposed in each of the top and the bottom, each eye hook having a base larger than the  
10 apertures rotatably secured inside the central body and a hook portion extending through the  
11 aperture, and a spring clip for attaching the spinner assembly to the frame and to the arm formed  
12 from a round rod of zinc-coated spring steel, the rod formed into a substantially closed "S"  
13 shape, each end of the rod bent outwardly from the spring clip to form a receiving channel for  
14 receiving the frame and the arm.

15  
16 23. The mobile of claim 22, wherein a plurality of display members is suspended from at  
17 least one end of the arm, the balance point located on the arm at a pre-determined point such that  
18 a particular combination of display members is balanced.

19  
20 24. The mobile of claim 23, wherein at least one other arm is suspended from at least one end  
21 of the arm with one of the freely rotatable connectors.

1 25. The mobile of claim 22, wherein the display member comprises a display enclosure  
2 comprising:  
3 a single, flat sheet of transparent material folded over onto itself to form opposing panels  
4 for receiving a substantially flat item for display therebetween;  
5 the panels having a top and an aperture near the top and through the panels for connecting  
6 the panels to a freely rotatable connector;  
7 the panels spaced apart approximately one mm to form a bottom for supporting the  
8 display item and for facilitating movement of the display item between the panels; and  
9 at least one panel having a cutout near an edge of the panel for facilitating insertion and  
10 removal of the display item between the panels.

11  
12 26. The mobile of claim 25, wherein the sheet of transparent material comprises polyethylene  
13 terephthalate glycol.

14  
15 27. A method of using a self-centering mobile, comprising:  
16 providing a frame, a plurality of freely rotatable connectors, and a horizontally disposed  
17 arm comprising a round rod of spring steel and a substantially closed loop at each of two ends  
18 and at a balance point between the two ends;  
19 suspending the arm from the frame at the balance point with one of the freely rotatable  
20 connectors; and  
21 suspending from each end of the arm with another one of the freely rotatable connectors a  
22 display member having a weight so that the arm is balanced when suspended from the frame at  
23 the arm balance point.

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28. The method of claim 27, further comprising suspending each of the arm from the frame and the display member from each end of the arm with a spring clip formed from a round rod of spring steel into a substantially closed “S” shape, each end of the rod bent outwardly from the spring clip to form a receiving channel for receiving the frame and the arm, one of the spring clips attached to the top and another spring clip attached to the bottom of a spinner assembly adapted to rotate freely for 360 degrees in both clockwise and counter-clockwise directions.

29. The method of claim 27, further comprising suspending a plurality of display members from at least one end of the arm, the balance point located on the arm at a pre-determined point such that a particular combination of display members is balanced.

30. The method of claim 27, further comprising suspending at least one other arm from at least one end of the arm with one of the freely rotatable connectors.

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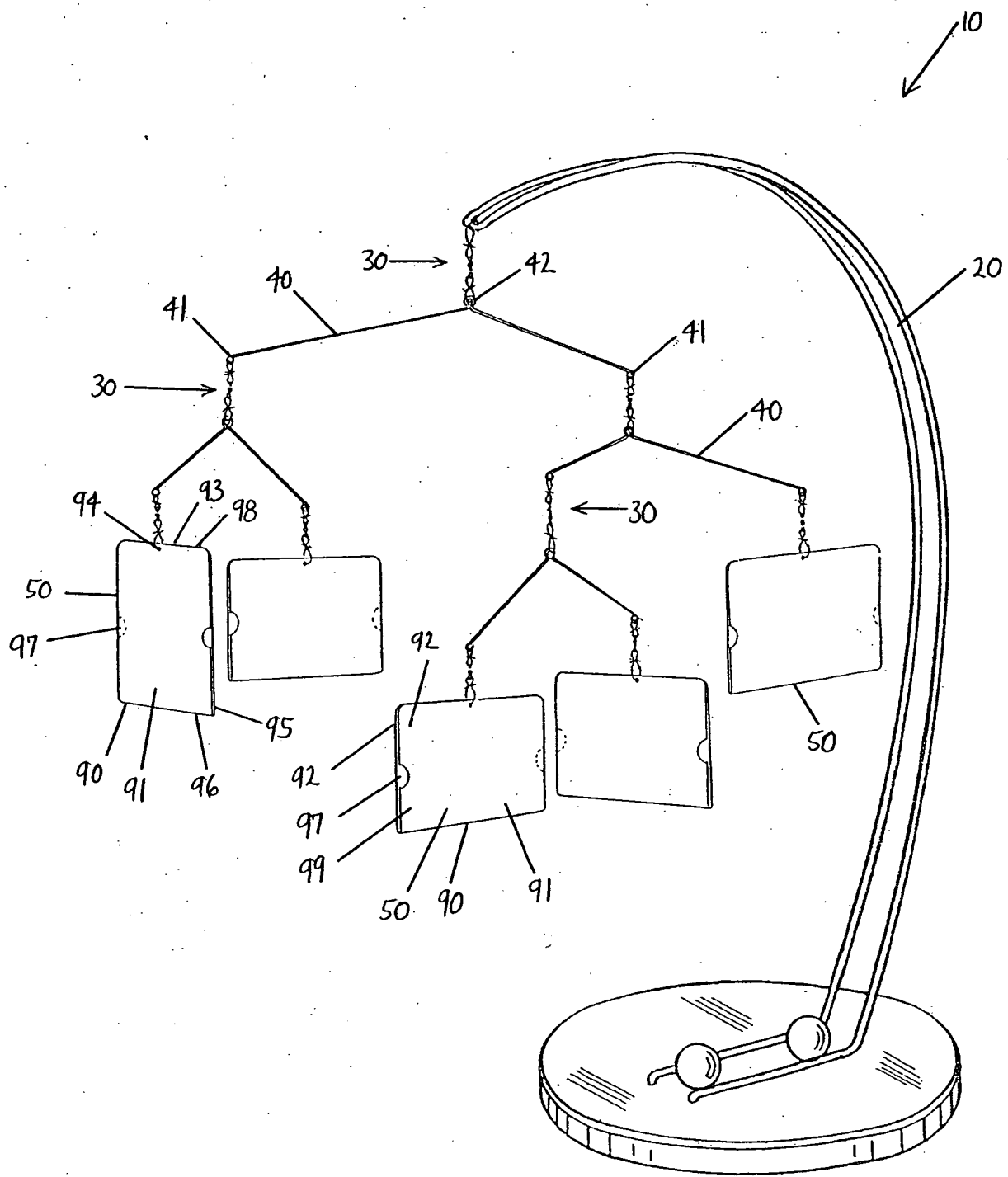


FIG. 1

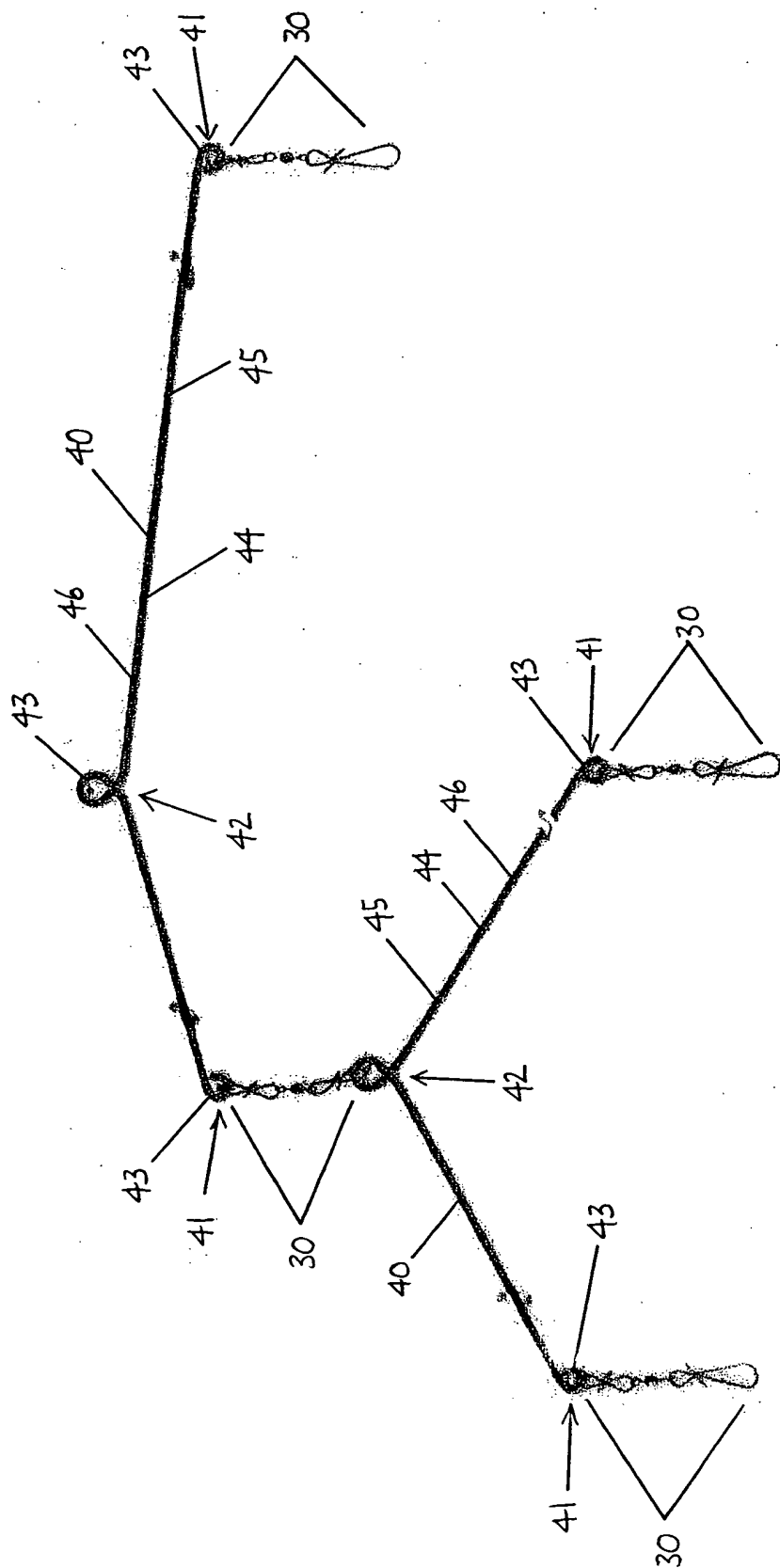


FIG. 2

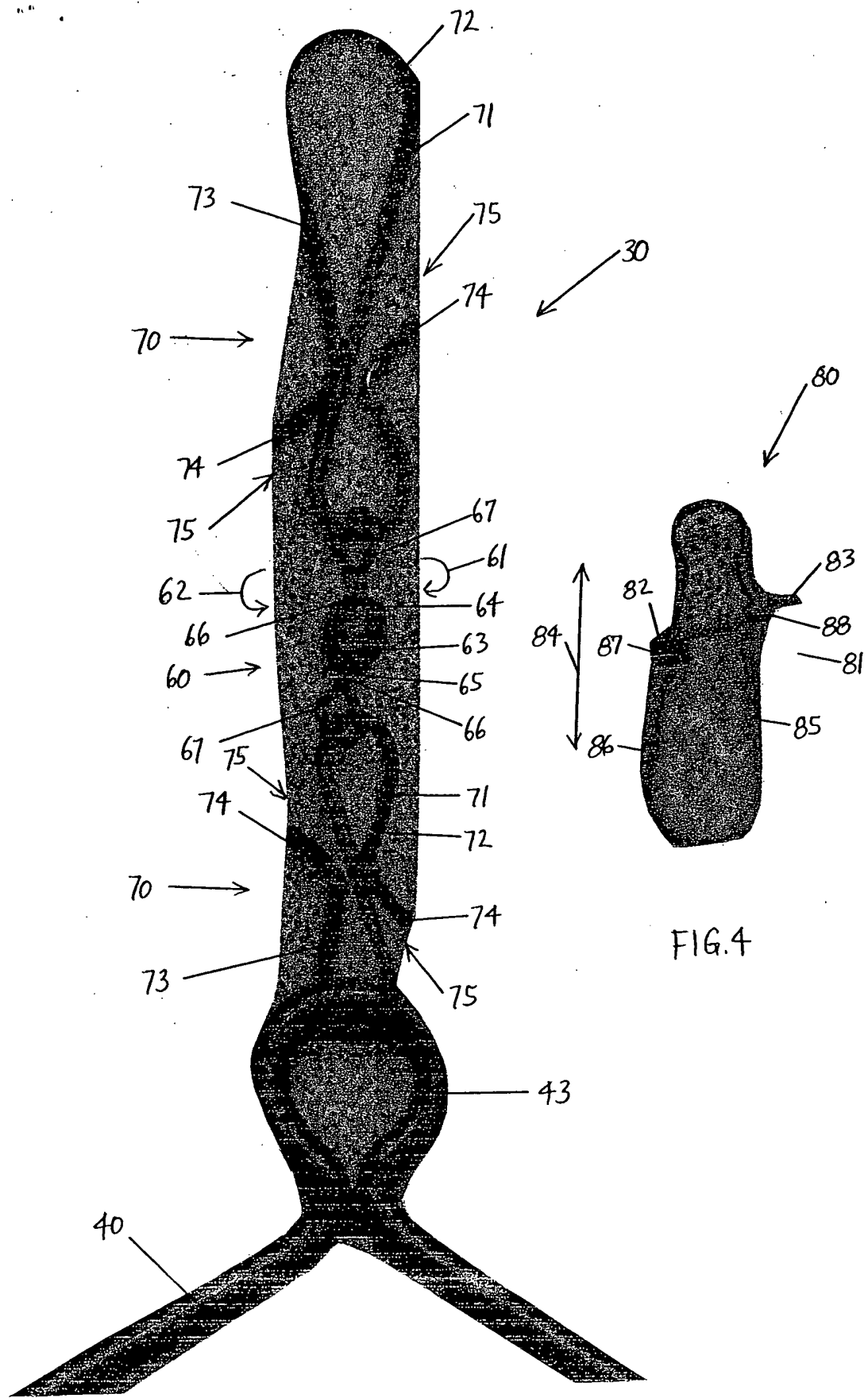


FIG. 3

FIG. 4

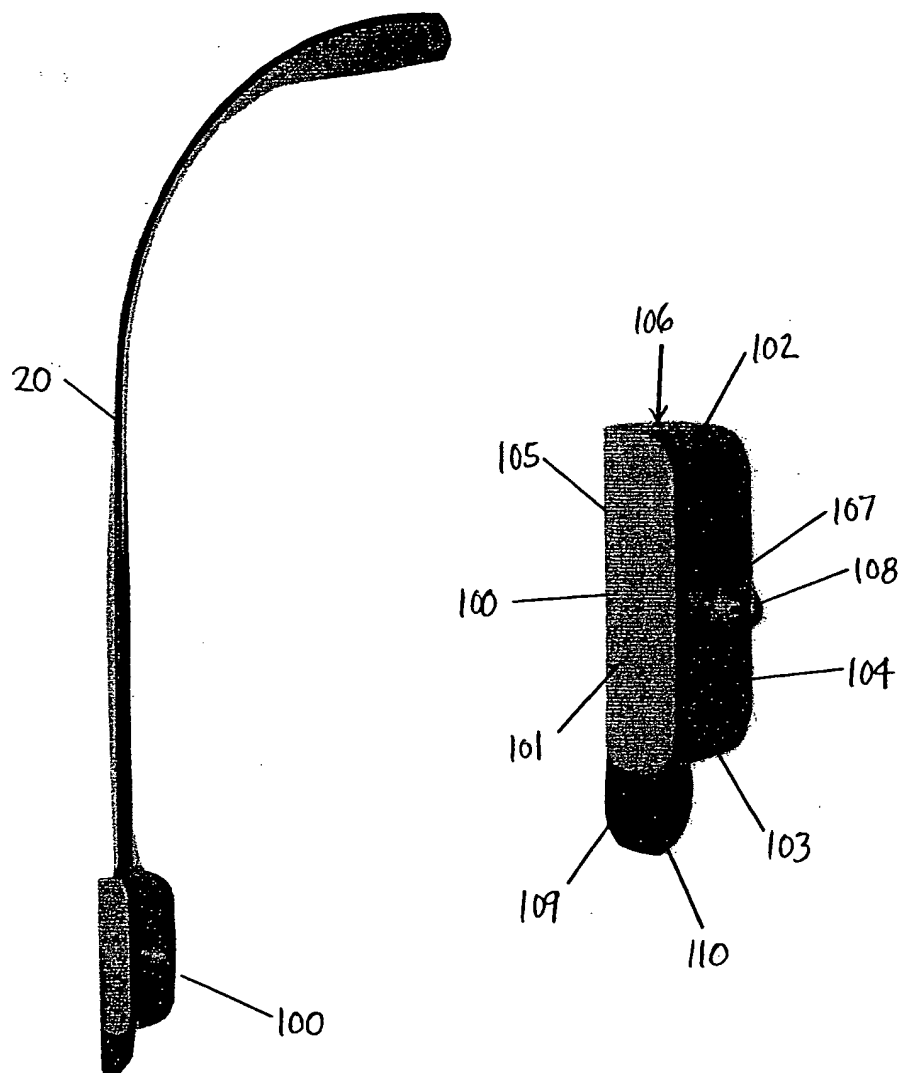


FIG. 5

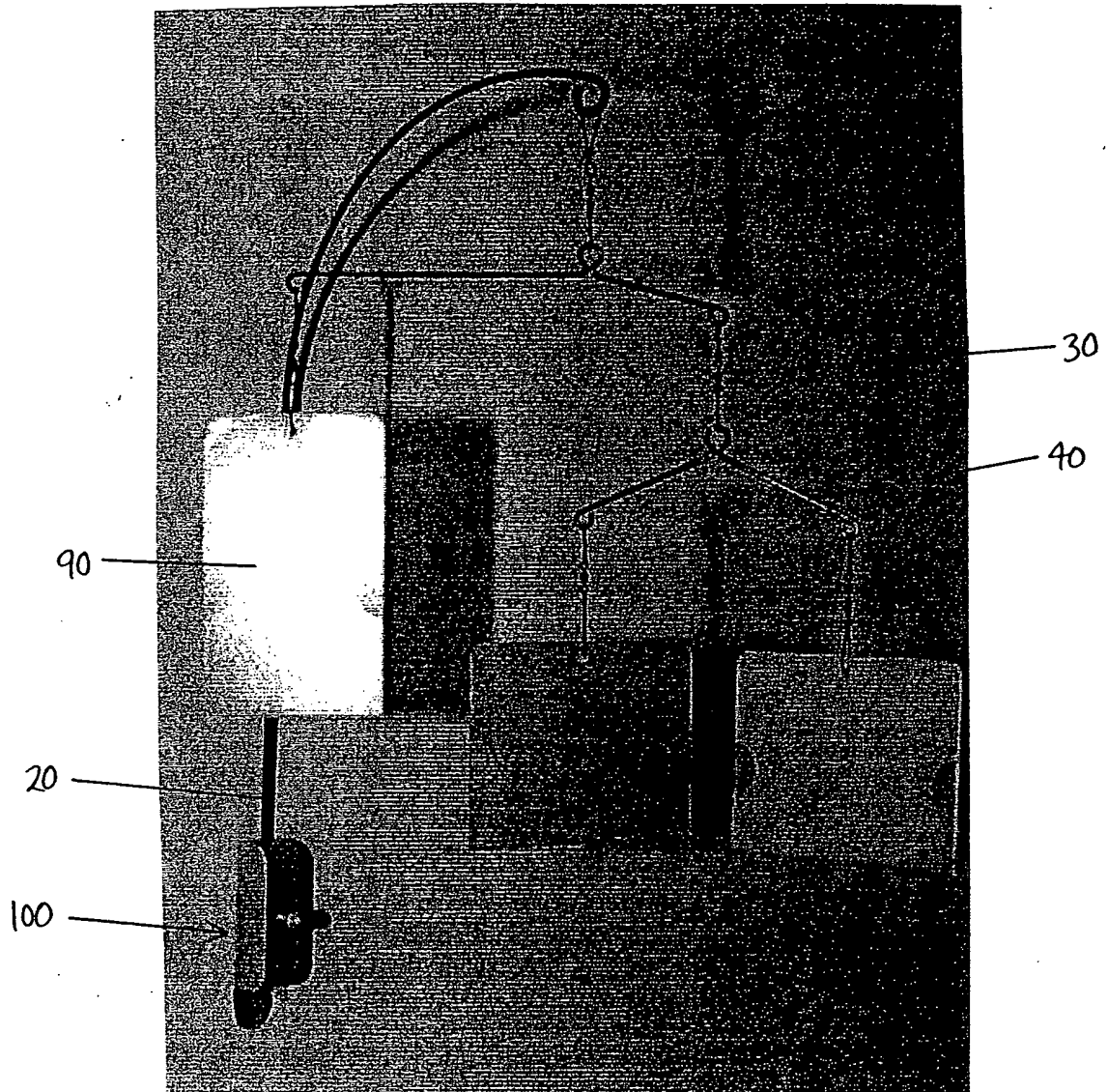


FIG. 6

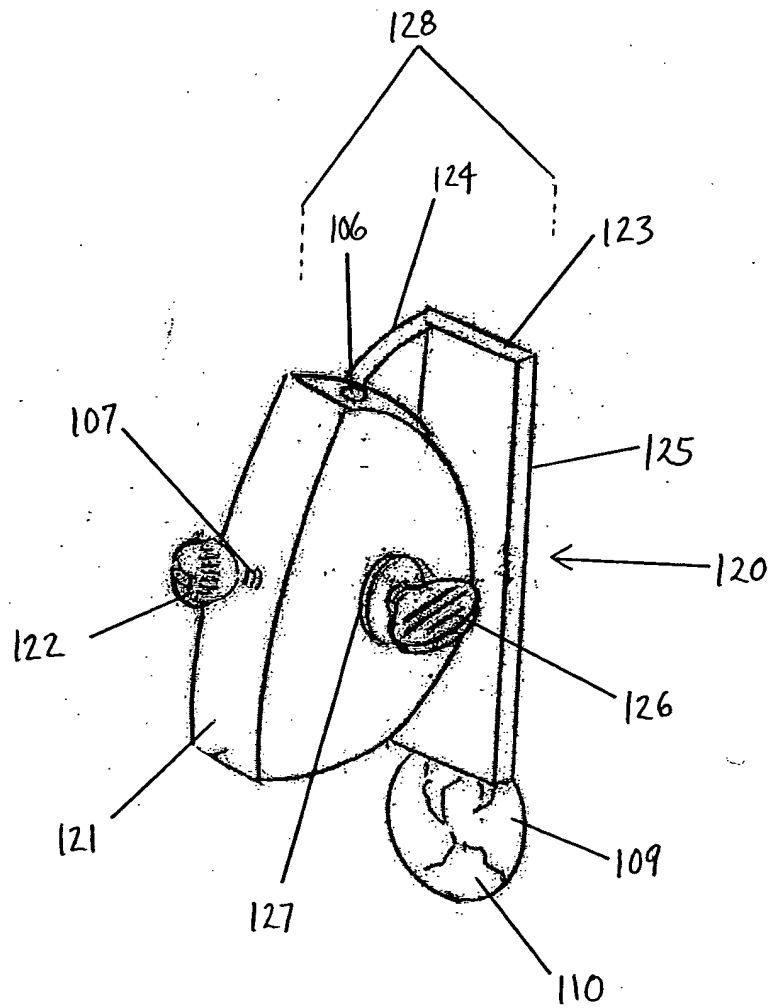


FIG. 7

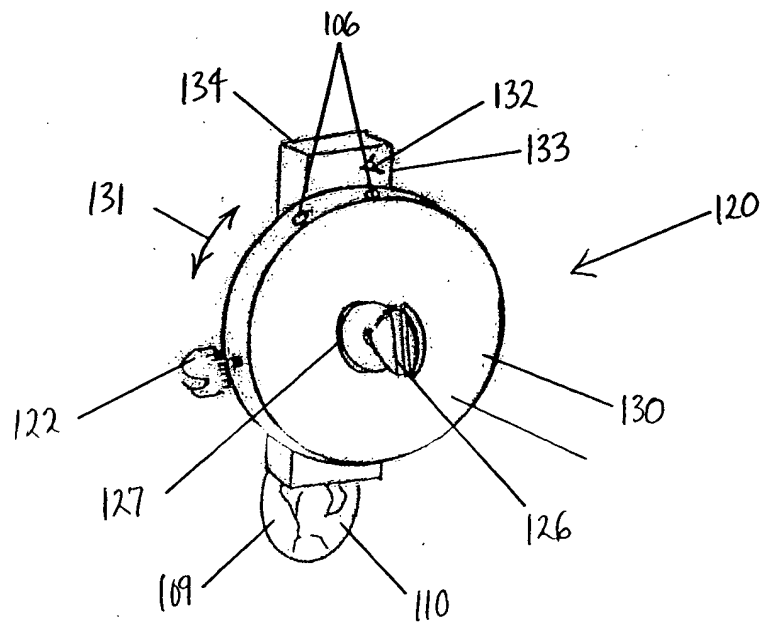


FIG. 8

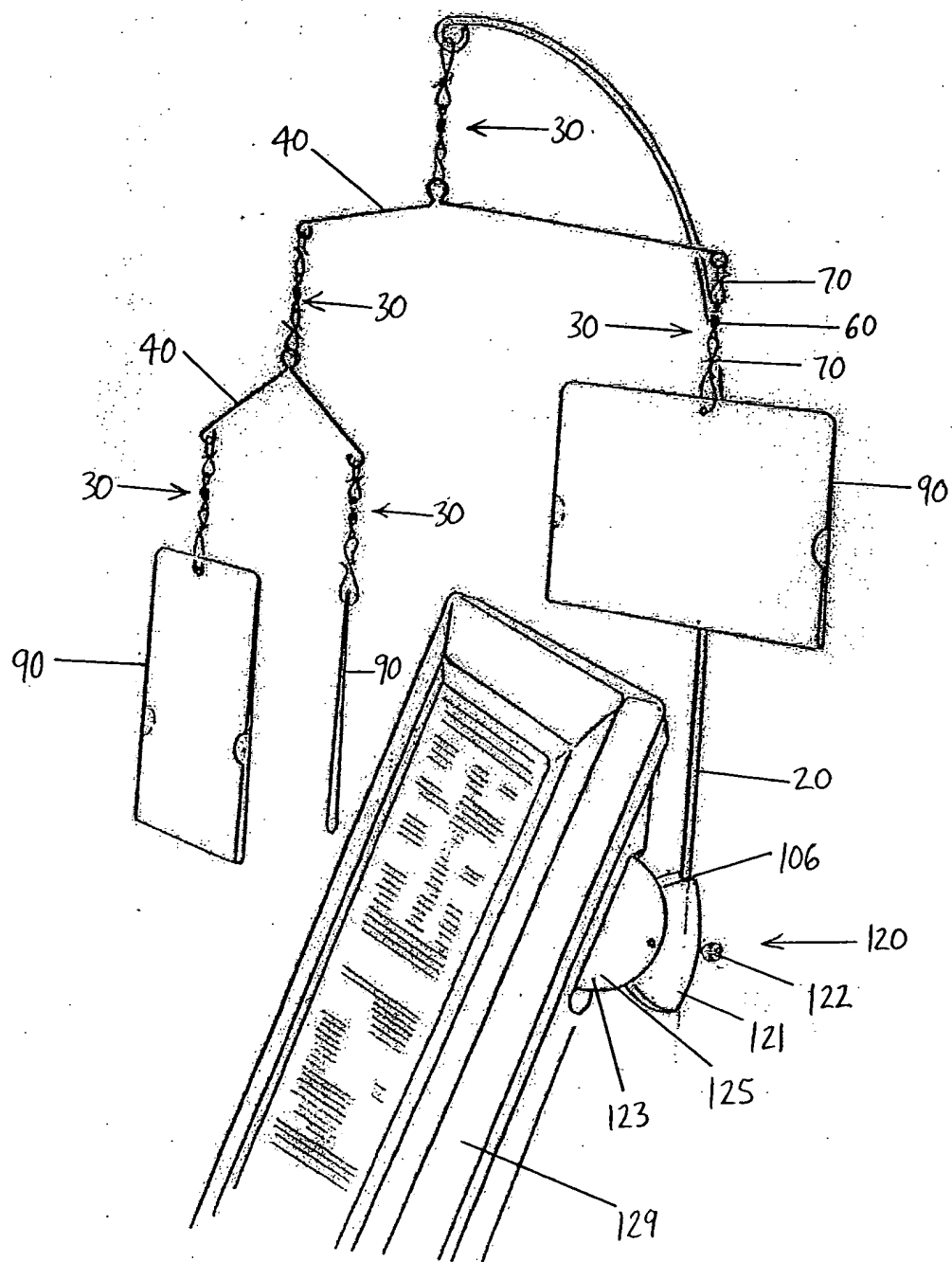


FIG. 9





PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application of : Sanford Henick et al.  
Serial No. : Applied For Herewith  
Filed : February 17, 2004  
For : Self-Centering Mobile  
Examiner : Unassigned  
Art Unit : Unassigned

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Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

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Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.56, 1.97 and 1.98, the attention of the Patent and Trademark Office is hereby directed to the reference listed on the attached Form PTO/SB/08A. A copy of the reference listed on the attached form is submitted herewith.

It is respectfully requested that the references listed on the attached form be expressly considered by the Examiner and be made of record in the application and appear among the "References Cited" on any patent to issue therefrom.

This Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted prior to the mailing of a first action on the merits in the present application. Accordingly, it is believed that no fees are due for consideration of this Information Disclosure Statement. However, should any fees be due, the Assistant Commissioner is authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 16-1435. A duplicate of this sheet is attached for that purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 2/17/04

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PATENT

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Serial No. : Applied For Herewith  
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Art Unit : Unassigned

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Dear Sir:

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT**

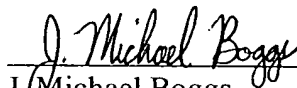
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**Complete if Known**

Application Number	Applied For Herewith
Filing Date	February 17, 2004
First Named Inventor	Sanford Henick et al.
Group Art Unit	Unassigned
Examiner Name	Unassigned
Attorney Docket Number	36869-280284

EV 216 832 695 US

**U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS**

Examiner Initials*	Cite No. <sup>1</sup>	U.S. Patent Document		Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD-YYYY	Pages, Columns, Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
		Number	Kind Code <sup>2</sup> (if known)			
	1	4,510,189		Leroy Girard	04-09-1985	
	2	4,567,682		Peter W. Hurxthal	02-04-1986	
	3	4,729,182		Eli L. Sherman	03-08-1988	
	4	5,606,816		Richard Schwartz	03-04-1997	
	5	D444,633 S		Sanford Henick	07-10-2001	
	6	D459,898 S		Sanford Henick	07-09-2002	
	7	D460,273 S		Sanford Henick	07-16-2002	
	8	D465,932 S		Sanford Henick	11-26-2002	
	9	D474,616 S		Sanford Henick	05-20-2003	
	10	D474,899 S		Sanford Henick	05-27-2003	
	11	D479,654 S		Sanford Henick	09-16-2003	
	12	D479,772 S		Sanford Henick	09-23-2003	

**FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS**

Examiner Initials*	Cite No. <sup>1</sup>	Foreign Patent Document			Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD-YYYY	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T <sup>6</sup>
		Office <sup>3</sup>	Number <sup>4</sup>	Kind Code <sup>2</sup> (if known)				

**OTHER PRIOR ART - NON PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS**

Examiner Initials*	Cite No. <sup>1</sup>	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc.), date, page(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published.	T <sup>2</sup>
	13	ROSE, TIMOTHY, Interactivity-Exploring the Fine Art of Mobiles, Chronicle Books, San Francisco (2000).	
	14	Learning Curve Toys, Lamaze Infant Development System (1996).	
	15	The Right Start Babies to Kids, Holiday 1998 Catalog, page 46, Westlake Village, CA (1998).	

Examiner Signature		Date Considered	
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\*EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw line through citation if not in conformation and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

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36869-280284

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*In re application of:* Sanford Henick et al.  
*For:* Self-Centering Mobile  
*Serial No.:* Applied For Hercwith  
*Filing Date:* February 17, 2004  
*Express Mail Number:* EV 216 832 695 US

19270 U.S. PTO  
10/781039



***The Following Was Received by the PTO:***

- ☒ Express Mail Certificate (No. EV 216 832 695 US);
- ☒ Utility Patent Application Transmittal (PTO/SB/05);
- ☒ Transmittal of Application Under 37 CFR 1.41(c);
- ☒ Utility Patent Application (Specification-30 pages, drawings-8 pages (Figs. 1-10));
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement Transmittal;
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement (in duplicate);
- ☒ 15 References (12 Patents and 3 Other Documents); and
- ☒ Return Post Card.

*Date Mailed to PTO: February 17, 2004 --Client Matter No.: 36869-280284*

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J. Michael Boggs  
Kilpatrick Stockton LLP  
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Winston-Salem NC 27101

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